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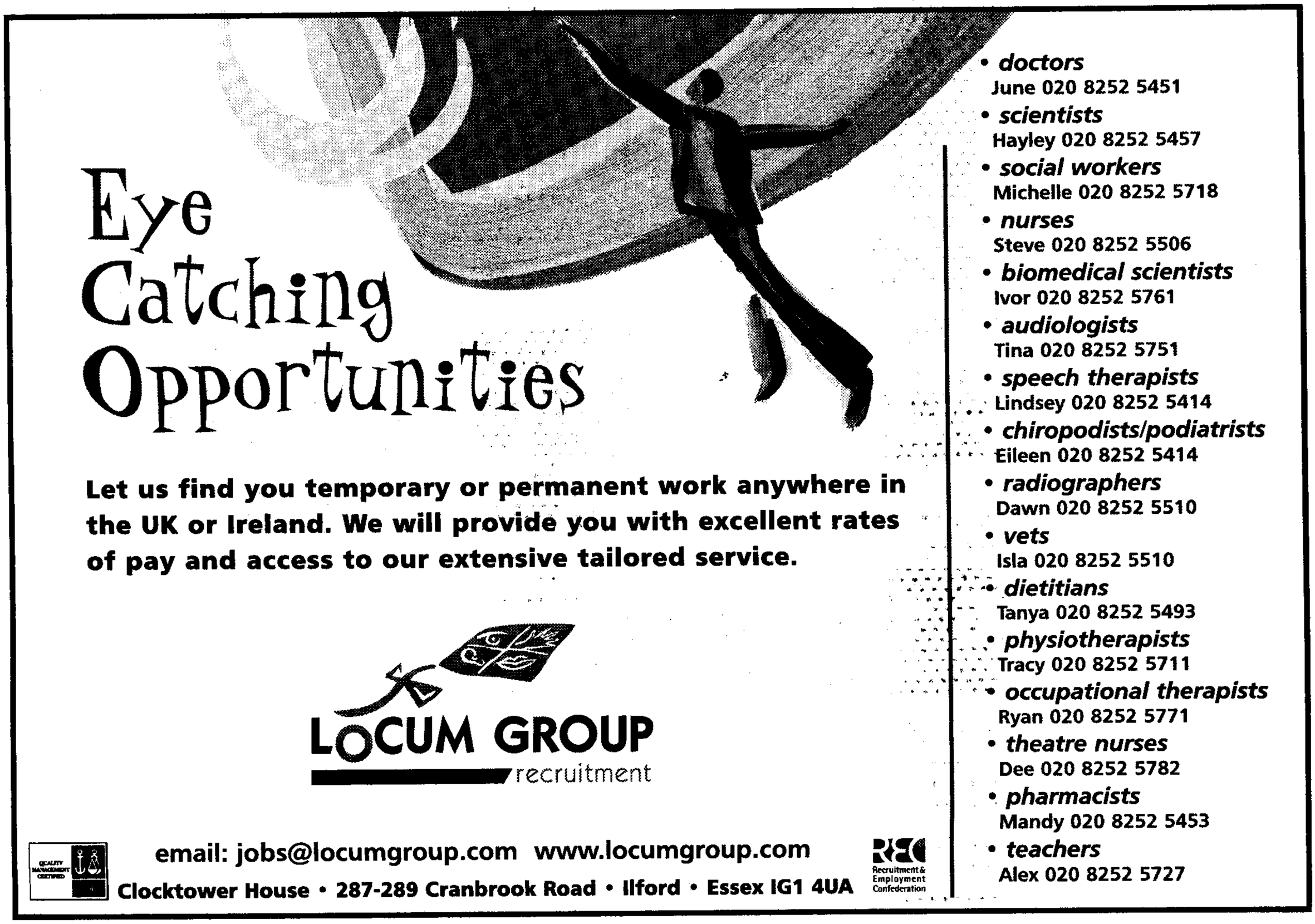
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# VOICE OF The Mirror

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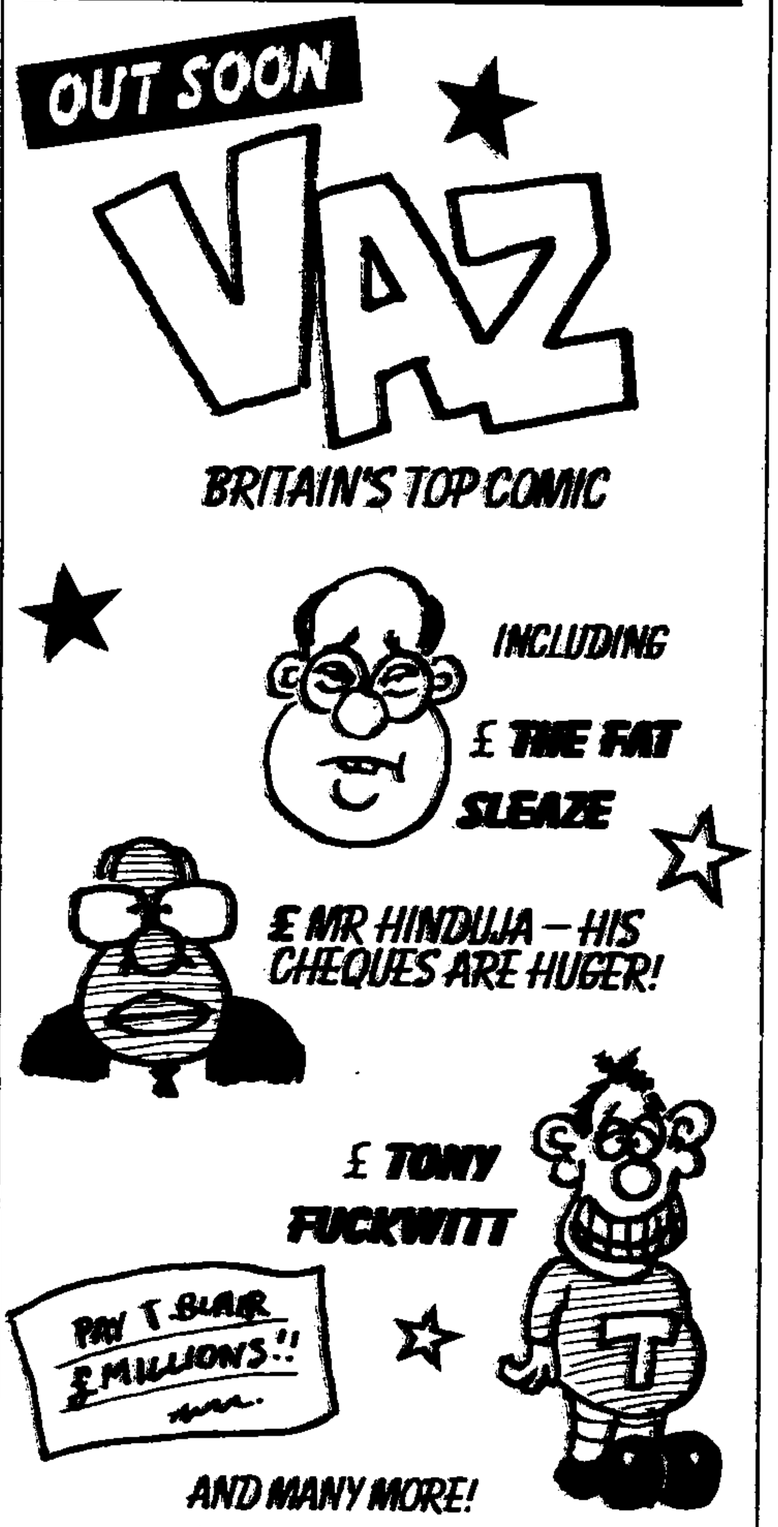




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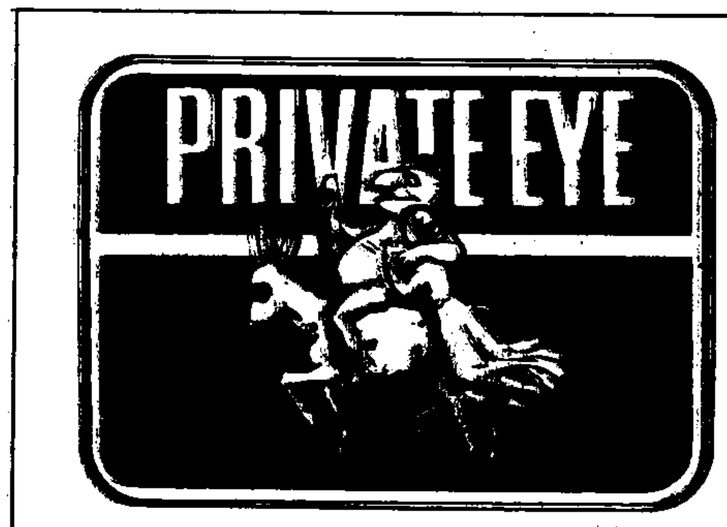


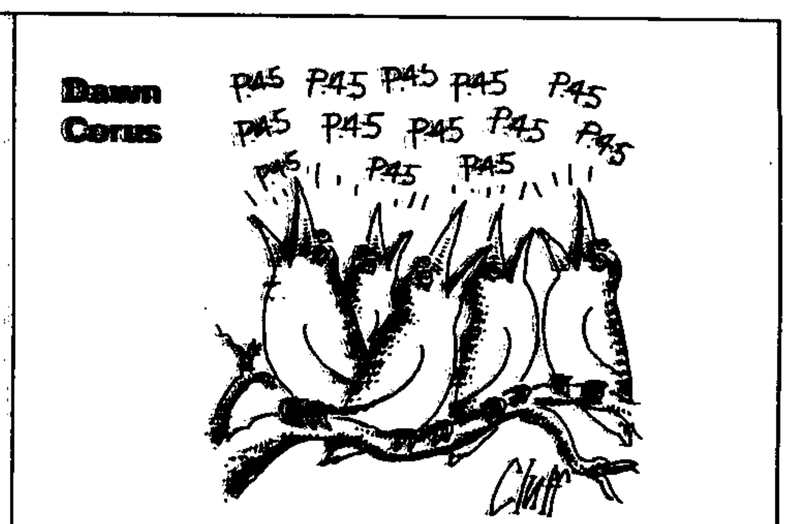


**THERE was much hilarity in Belfast at the stern letter despatched by Messrs Goldsmith, solicitors to Peter Mandelson, warning newspapers not to accuse their client of being a liar.**

For shortly before his resignation, at a reception in Hillsborough Castle for Ulster hacks, Mandy actually owned up to a little fib. As *Belfast Telegraph* columnist Barry White reported, Mandy told the local hacks "how much more agreeable we were than the national press pack, whom he had entertained before Christmas, and who afterwards had publicised the fact that he wasn't too keen on Bill Clinton's successor".

Of course it was always obvious that Mandy had indeed badmouthed George W. Bush and then thought better of it. This is why no national newspaper was prepared to retract the story when he denied it. But Mandelson had rather better treatment from the BBC. After hearing the claim repeated by a *Today* programme contributor, he reached for the phone and dictated a flat denial – which was read out minutes later by a breathless Sue McGhastly.

Presumably the BBC, renowned for its fearless dissection of "new" Labour, will now wish to retract the retraction.

**AFTER returning to the Cabinet as Northern Ireland secretary in 1999, Peter Mandelson gave an interview to three schoolchildren from Bambridge Academy, one of whom asked if it was ever acceptable for politicians to lie.**

"No, I don't think it is acceptable," the minister replied, with an Old Testament rectitude that Ian Paisley would have admired. "I can't varnish that in any way at all. I think that politicians gain much more respect for themselves and for politics as a whole if they are straight with people. I've always been straight with people…"

*"My role in relation to the dome is as shareholder, not as head of the sponsorship team… Although I receive regular reports from the board of the New Millennium Experience Company on its significant progress in raising sponsorship, I have never been, and do not intend to be, involved in procuring or negotiating sponsorship deals."*

— Parliamentary answer from Peter Mandelson (on his duties as Dome minister), 9 Nov. 1998

*"In 1998 I was working very hard to make a success of a very difficult public project, the Millennium Dome. Whatever you think of that project, it had to be financed by private and public sponsorship. That was how the Conservative government had constructed the financing. I wasn't dealing with the Hindujas for myself but for this public project… As Dome minister from 1997, I probably saw them at least half a dozen times."*

— Article by Peter Mandelson, *Sunday Times*, 28 January 2001

**IT WAS no surprise to hear "e-commerce" minister and Leicester West MP Patricia Hewitt's linked with the Hinduja brothers.**

She "received hospitality" from the Hindujas at their homes in Bombay and London, and received Gopichand at her office in the department of trade. Hewitt was formerly head of research at Andersen Consulting; and while the brothers were hobnobbing with her, the Hinduja Group hired her old firm (now known as Accenture) to "validate" its "restructuring strategy", particularly its "e-business".

## JUST FANCY THAT!

*"My heart goes out to them."*

— Royal College of Pathologists representative, interviewed on Classic FM about the distress caused to families by the report into the Alder Hey Hospital organ-donor scandal.

**THE Tories' baying for blood in the Hinduja scandal is unlikely to last long as the party's own efforts on behalf of "the piglets", as the brothers are known, becomes public.**

The brothers had close contacts with top Tories throughout the Thatcher and Major years. Prominent Tories who graced their legendary charity dinners included ex-leader Edward Heath and Michael Heseltine. But the Tory who probably ate more Hinduja lunches than anyone was Lloyd's underwriter Basil Feldman, a senior official in the party for almost all the years Thatcher and Major were in power.

Feldman chaired the National Union of the Conservative Party under Thatcher in 1985 and 1986 and was treasurer under Major after 1996. During this time he was in close touch with the piglets and was even heard to moan about yet another lunch at their expense, complaining: "Oh no, they will only have another go at me about their passports." Feldman became a knight under Thatcher and a lord under Major.

**BILL CLINTON's pardon for fugitive commodity trader Marc Rich could have proved awkward for the Tories, as they try to seize the moral high ground by attacking Labour's association with "controversial" tycoons.**

One of Rich's former employees is William Hague's close friend and adviser Alan Duncan MP, who worked for Marc Rich & Company from 1982 until 1988 – four years *after* the billionaire had fled to Switzerland, having been charged in the US with 65 counts of racketeering, fraud, tax evasion and illegal trading with Iran.

Fortunately, however, no newspaper has seen fit to mention the Duncan-Rich connection.

**OH, YEAH?** "It's just a short step from arresting greengrocers to loading the trains to Belsen."

— Richard Littlejohn on personal freedom and obnoxious bureaucrats, the *Sun*, Tuesday 23 January


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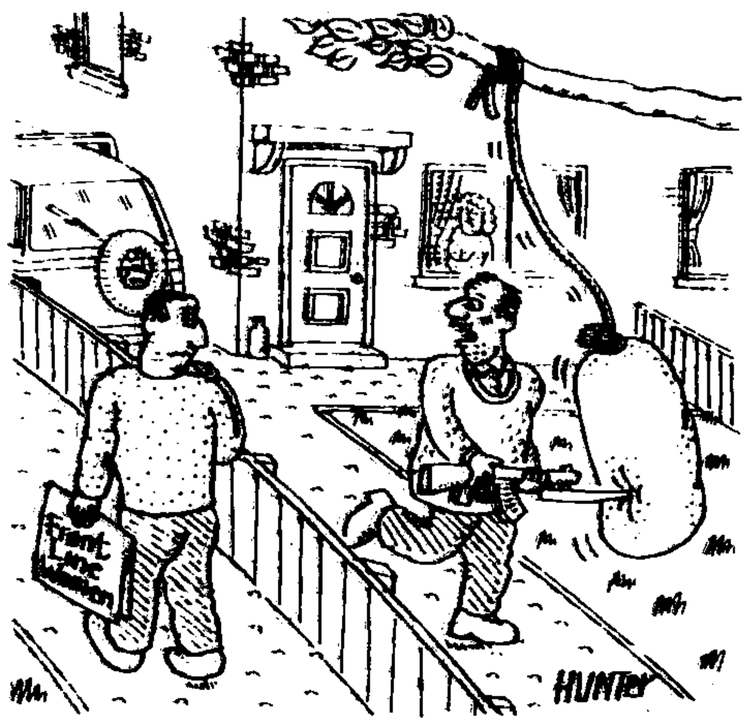



*"I'm getting in touch with my feminine side!"*

# NEWS

**WHEN Cherie Booth QC and some barrister chums launched Matrix Chambers last year, there was much talk of their commitment to ethics and human rights. But perhaps this noble cause doesn't pay as well as they had expected. It's hard to think of any other explanation for the bizarre and unreported decision by two of Matrix's leading QCs, Nicholas Blake and Claire Montgomery, to accept a six-figure brief fee from the current government of Fiji.**

This "interim regime" – which seized power following a coup last May, declared martial law, deposed the elected president Ratu Mara and suspended the multi-racial constitution – has been universally condemned for its destruction of democracy and oppression of the Fijian Indians. Shortly before Christmas Fiji's own high court ruled that the government was illegal, as was its suspension of the 1997 constitution. The regime's appeal against the judgement, due to be heard later this month, will now be led by Blake and Montgomery.

**ON THE day of the Lockerbie verdict, with the attention of the press safely diverted, the department of health quietly published the report of the investigation into the Bedford bodies scandal (see *Eye* 1020), which saw the resignation of the hospital's chief executive Ken Williams.**

As revealed first in the *Eye,* the investigation into the macabre pictures which appeared in the national press of dead bodies stored in the hospital's chapel of rest found that "most but not all staff, when confronted by the newspaper pictures, refused to believe that the photographs could have been obtained except by tampering with the bodies and their coverings beforehand".

The report also admitted, as suggested in the *Eye*, that difficult relations between staff and management following the dismissal of cardiology technician and MSF shop steward Monica Carmichael last year had led to the general belief among management and medical staff that there was "a campaign to discredit the chief executive by any means and that the taking of the photographs was a deliberate act in this campaign".

The investigators do not agree with the *Eye* on all points, however. The report claims that the chief executive chose to stand down following a preliminary investigation into events on 15 January. In fact, as the *Eye* revealed, NHS chief executive Nigel Crisp told Ken Williams he was getting the chop on Sunday 14 January, the day the picture appeared in the *Bedfordshire on Sunday* and the *Sunday Telegraph*, and before any sort of investigation had taken place.

**IF A private company planned to shell out £2.5bn on new technology, it is a safe bet it would first ensure the tools were up to the job. But such thinking appears lost on government departments.**

As reported in *Eye* 1003, when the home office announced the launch of a new police radio network, the public safety radio communications project (PSRCP), last March, serious concerns were voiced by senior police officers.

Lo and behold, in Jersey, the first area to introduce the new system, and in Lancashire where a pilot scheme is underway, it has emerged that the digital pulses sent out from PSRCP handsets to radio masts can interfere with medical equipment, breath-tests and speed-trap radars. Police forces whose budgets are being slashed to pay for PSRCP will surely agree that £2.5bn is money well spent on a new radio system so advanced it cannot be used in hospitals or in pursuit of speeding or drunken drivers.

# Street Of Shame

**THIS week's extravaganza at Somerset House for the press complaints commission (PCC) provoked a frenzy of excitement in the tabloids as the first occasion on which Camilla Parker-Bowles and Prince William would be seen together.**

But what did *Times* hack Andrew Pierce mean when he described the party as a "coming-out", and noted that the guest-list included such luminaries as George Michael and Sir Elton John? Could he by any chance be referring to Guy Black, director of the PCC, and his live-in boyfriend Mark Bolland, deputy private secretary to the Prince of Wales?

Black's relationship with Bolland may explain why Charles, Camilla and Wills all agreed to attend the shindig, and why the PCC has been so assiduous in looking after their interests. When the PCC recently rebuked *OK!* Magazine for printing harmless but unauthorised pictures of William, news of its censure was leaked to a *Times* hack who happens to be a dear friend of both Black and Bolland. Who he? Step forward, Andrew Pierce.

**POOR old Vanessa Feltz. Now that Thinny Feltz has been dumped by the BBC (yes: she's lost another two million pounds!) she is forced to flog her wares to all takers: cue a weekly column in the new *Daily Express* supplement "*OK! Express*".**

Her first offering includes a helpful snippet of advice for fellow celebrity slimmer Carol Vorderman, who has just embarked on a relationship with a man four years her junior. "Might I suggest," proffers La Feltz, "that if Carol wants to keep up her stamina for love, she lets herself off her hugely restrictive detox diet and tucks into a few square meals?"

What sort of nourishing fare could she have in mind? Surely not the delicious low-fat recipes featured in the *Daily Mail's* Vanessa Feltz Diet?

**WHEN *Panorama* investigated the organ scandal at Alder Hey a year before the latest department of health inquiry hit the headlines, the programme invoked the utter contempt of at least one hack.**

The *Guardian's* level-headed columnist Polly Toynbee accused the BBC investigative show (on which she herself worked for a brief period) of "emotional decadence" in producing such "tabloid television", concluding: "Public sympathy is a precious and limited resource: should it really be squandered on bits of dead bodies?"

Her sensitive argument was lost on other hacks at the *Grauniad*, where more than 70 stories concerning Alder Hey have appeared over the past year.

**FULL marks for sensitive coverage of the Indian earthquake go to Reuters.**

On Friday 26 January the ghoulish news wire cut straight to what matters: "Comex gold was down, but holding above recent lows in Friday morning trade, after a powerful earthquake rocked India's bullion centre Ahmedabad, where much of the world's gold demand originates."

Even when the enormity of the death toll became clear, Reuter's witty Bombay correspondent couldn't resist a play on words, writing on Monday 29 January: "Indian shares started shakily on Monday as financial markets opened after a devastating earthquake left an estimated 20,000 people dead in Gujarat, the country's second most industrialised state."

**RICHARD Desmond and his henchmen seem to think a national tabloid doesn't really need hacks. But even they concede there must be an astrologer.**

Alas, top stargazers don't come cheap. Jonathan Cainer, who has just departed from the Grey Lubyanka, had a basic six-figure salary plus a large share of the spoils from the *Express*'s dial-a-horoscope service, which took his total earnings up to well over £250,000. Knowing their boss's cost-cutting zeal, Desmond's boxwallahs wondered how on earth they could afford a replacement.

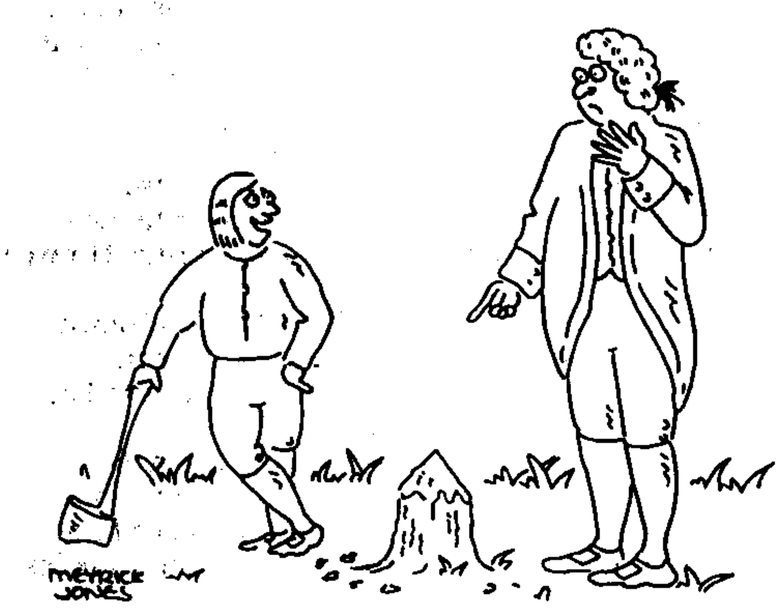
Then inspiration struck. Doesn't *OK!* Magazine have an astrologer, some young Gypsy from Devon called Claire Petulengro? She has duly been offered the chance to write a daily *Express* horoscope as well – for a princely annual salary of £10,000.

PS: Doubtless by pure coincidence, this week's *OK!* is gallantly trying to raise her profile by running seven pages of photos of Claire Petulengro with her new baby son, Paris. It doesn't say much for her celestial powers that although she expected and wanted a Libran, her child arrived a day early and is thus a Virgo. Still, Petulengro is clearly a remarkable creature in other ways: she reveals that she gave birth "sitting in a bikini, with a glass of milk in her hand". Quite how her son fought his way through the swimsuit is a mystery that only Mystic Meg could explain.

**SOME puzzlement has been caused by the fact that Richard Desmond owns the gay men's magazine *Attitude*. Can it be that he's more liberal and less neanderthal than his detractors claim?**

Er, no. At *Attitude* he is best known for beginning staff meetings with the words "Morning, you bunch of fucking faggots..." When the mag's circulation dipped slightly, he put it down to the lack of women featured in its pages. Although the hacks pointed out that their readers didn't have quite the same tastes as aficionados of *Readers' Wives* etc, Dirty Des nevertheless forced them to run several editions with scantily clad babes. Unsurprisingly, sales did not increase.

**Young George W. Bush**



*"Of course, the so-called environmentalists would have us believe that it's wrong to chop down trees"*

**RICHARD DESMOND's sidekick Paul "I know nothing about newspapers" Ashford is clearly a popular guy, to judge by the letters in his defence which have been arriving at the *Eye*. They describe him as a donnish chap with no fewer than two degrees (one in philosophy) and a profound interest in art and literature.**

This is borne out by the experience of Rosie Boycott. According to her former colleagues, in Rosie's last weeks at the *Express* Ashford often sent her poems that he had written celebrating the beauties of Nature. They are said to be "Wordsworthian" in tone.

Meanwhile Ashford's disgusting boss, Dirty Desmond, has been trying to persuade the doubters that he too is a civilised fellow. True, he concedes, his "adult" mags may have a lot of naked women in ungainly poses – but, he emphasises sternly, "I don't do animals and I don't do Dutch". (Any *Eye* readers who know what "Dutch" means are invited to send Lord Gnome an explanation.)

Since he is such a stickler for high moral standards, clearly there can be no truth in the rumour that Dirty Des is about to do a deal with the self-confessed briber Mohamed Fayed under which the *Express* will be responsible for distributing the Phoney Pharaoh's mighty organ, *Punch*.

***MARIE CLAIRE*** **magazine worked itself into a tizz in December when hackette Katie Agnew wrote about her experiences following a fox hunt with a group of protestors.**

"There's nothing less attractive than a fat man in jodhpurs, except perhaps one who gets his kicks from killing foxes," she wrote with heart-felt passion, describing in gruesome detail what happens to the poor ickle foxes. The hounds too were an object of sympathy. "Several thousand hounds are shot each year when they become too slow to hunt – usually at six or seven years old," she added.

Agnew described the hunters in highly disparaging terms, suggesting that *Marie Claire* is firmly on the side of the persecuted furry creatures. How odd, then, that when the mag was approached by the RSPCA as recently as this January to run an advert demanding an end to the sale of imported cosmetics that are tested on animals (the practice is now banned in the UK) *Marie Claire* was unable to oblige. This, despite the obvious horrific cruelty imposed on helpless bunnies who have a variety of potentially toxic potions and lotions squirted into their eyes and orifices so that women who read magazines like *Marie Claire* can pile on the slap and scent safely.

After testing, the animals – some 2.5 million around the globe – are all killed. But IPC Publishing's still felt unable to accept the RSPCA's £16,151 – the going rate for a full-page ad in *MC*. Obviously it's a drop in the ocean for a title which makes many millions each year in advertising revenue from cosmetics, perfume and toiletries, the vast majority of whose ingredients are still tested abroad on animals. Much easier to jump on a bandwagon at home that isn't going to affect advertising revenue, isn't it?

**THE fortunes of an Irish oil and gas exploration company tipped heavily by the *Mirror's* erstwhile City Slickers appear to have followed a similar route to those of Messrs Hipwell and Bhoyrul.**

On 12 January 2000 the City Slickers claimed that Bula Resources, chaired by the former Irish prime minister Albert Reynolds, had discovered new reserves of oil in Libya, one of just nine recommendations for the company made in the column. The company's share price rose by more than 26 percent the same day. Bula has since been questioned by the DTI as part of its investigation into the Slickergate scandal.

On 30 January Bula's chief executive John Hogan quit his post after just six months, leaving Reynolds in charge and causing shares to drop 42 percent to a nominal 1p. For some reason City Slickers' replacement, Suzy in the City, gave only the briefest of mentions to this new turn of events at a once-favoured company.

## AN INTRODUCTION TO HOMOEOPATHETIC MEDICINE

*Community Practitioner*

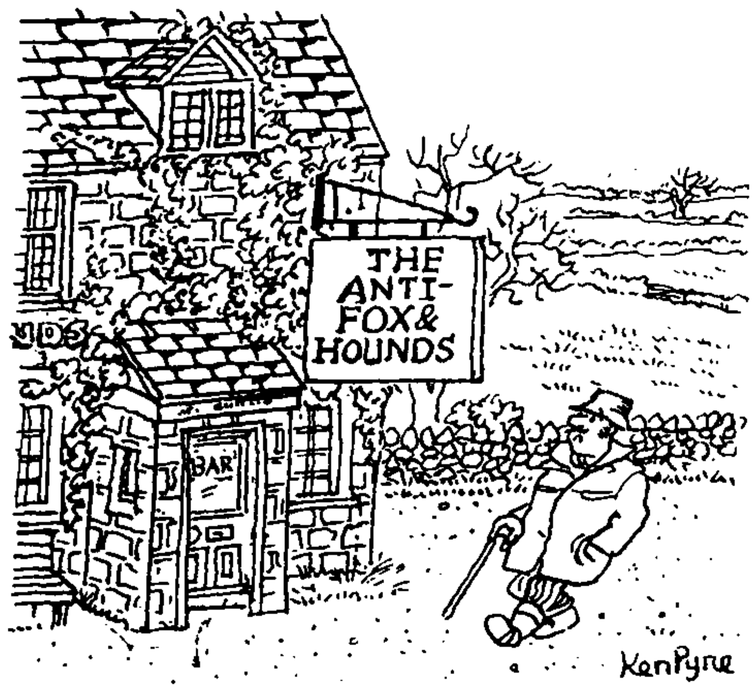
**COSTLY computer magazine *PC Format* (cover price £5.99), sent a crack team to the Bath branch of computer megastore PC World for its December issue to make a scathing attack on high prices entitled "PC Format Investigates... PC World".**

The techies' glossy accused PC World of being "a retailing goliath" which takes advantage of "a lucrative opportunity to sell overpriced products to the PC illiterate". The mag compared the prices of five popular products at PC World with those at internet computer shop, dabs.com. The verdict was a decisive thumbs down for PC World.

Regular readers may then have been bemused to open their January edition and read: "PC Format reinvestigates... PC World." The mag sheepishly explained: "We've had so many letters and emails that we thought it only right to run a follow-up piece reinvestigating the UK's biggest PC store."

Youthful hack, Ian Lewis, who penned the original piece, was forced to write an unreserved eulogy, maintaining that the store is "really great" and "always at the forefront in offering customers the best value". Quibbles over the price comparisons made in a response from PC World were laid out in full, showing the Dixons-owned store in a much better light.

This bizarre change of heart by editor Dan Hutchinson is surely unconnected to the fact that *PC Format* is owned by Future Publishing, which also does the contract publishing for... PC World.




# HACKWATCH

## Peter's Fairweather Friends

"For Pete's sake get this man in... One man must do well in next week's Cabinet reshuffle. Step up, Peter Mandelson – the minister between portfolios. Mandelson is not liked by many in his party. They think he's too full of himself. That's nonsense."

— *Sun* editorial, 24 July 1998

"Peter Mandelson's ideally qualified to be in the Cabinet."

— *Sun* editorial, 25 July 1998

"Today, at last, Tony Blair has the Cabinet he wants... That means sacking the tired and incompetent, and promoting Peter Mandelson to a job worthy of his talents."

— *Sun* editorial, 27 July 1998

"He [Mandelson] is out on his ear again because he is a lying, manipulative, oily, two-faced, nasty piece of work who should never have been allowed near the government in the first place... People will soon say Peter Who? That's good – he's best forgotten."

— *Sun* editorial, 25 January 2001

"Congratulations, Peter Mandelson. In today's Cabinet reshuffle you are set to be rewarded with a promotion into the heart of government. It is difficult to think of someone who is more deserving."

— *Daily Mirror* editorial, 27 July 1998

"He [Mandelson] lived on the edge, privately and politically, was utterly ruthless yet astonishingly thin-skinned about criticism. In many ways, he was an accident waiting to happen. This episode has damaged Labour and inevitably the prime minister who has staked so much faith in his friend and political guru."

— *Daily Mirror* editorial about Mandelson's home loan, 24 December 1998

"Tony Blair's decision to bring back Peter Mandelson is a good one. Mandelson has rebuilt his shattered political career with humility and a keen sense of having learned his lesson from the controversial house scandal that caused him to quit 11 months ago. He is also the perfect man to tackle the Northern Ireland peace process which lies on the verge of collapse. The job requires cunning, tenacity, and an ability to make the intransigent consider the unthinkable – all qualities that Mandelson has in abundance."

— *Daily Mirror* editorial, 12 October 1999

"Mr Mandelson is not going to resign again or be fired... He is a brilliant tactician who is doing a vital job in Northern Ireland very well – and someone who will be a key figure in helping Tony Blair win a second term in office. He is being targeted by right-wing newspapers now because he backs the euro and almost certainly because he is gay. This is an unsavoury state of affairs..."

— *Daily Mirror* editorial, 17 October 2000

"Few tears will be shed for Peter Mandelson... He will doubtless have a successful and glittering life. But it will not – must not – be in politics."

— *Daily Mirror* editorial, 25 January 2001

# MUSIC & MUSICIANS

**AS Glyndebourne whittles down the list of candidates to replace the ignominiously sacked Nicholas Snowman as general director, it's interesting to note that one name in the running is that of Elaine Padmore, current director of the Royal Opera.**

Padmore has only been at Covent Garden for a year. But it has been such a bad year there must have been plenty of occasions when she regretted leaving her job in command of the Danish Royal Opera in Copenhagen – a small but settled company where she had status, respect and plenty of support. London has been far less comfortable. And if it was bad enough having to deal with Covent Garden's bully of a chairman, Colin Southgate, it got considerably worse when Southgate pushed through the appointment of the BBC's Tony Hall to take overall charge of the House – ballet and opera combined – from the fleeing Michael Kaiser.

It's almost universally agreed that Hall (whose operatic credentials are limited and down-market) is the wrong man for the job. But then none of the right men wanted it. Although Elaine Padmore might have been the right woman, she was passed aside on the grounds that this was to be a general administrative position rather than an artistic one: all of which has left her in some doubt as to her function in Bow St. General management decisions will be claimed by Hall (a controlling personality), while artistic decisions will be taken by the incoming music director Antonio Pappano, whose title has been upgraded to artistic director for that reason.

No wonder Padmore is looking elsewhere.

● AS opera houses across the world celebrate the centenary of the death of Verdi which fell on 27 January, London opera-goers may recall that several years ago Covent Garden announced ambitious plans to do likewise. There was to be a grand sequence of all 28 of the composer's stage works performed in the months leading up to the day itself when something suitably spectacular was to happen in honour of the greatest name in operatic history.

But it didn't. The grand sequence of stageworks petered out with only a handful performed. The only Verdi the house has managed to rustle up for this year of years is a revival of the crass *Falstaff* it knocked together to open the refurbished auditorium in 1999, with a revival of its better (but still old) *Otello*. And the Garden's offering for the centenary weekend itself? A quick romp through a greatest hits medley of the composer's tunes, sung mid-afternoon by the ROH chorus in the small Linbury Studio Theatre. The distinguished Verdi conductor Sir Edward Downes, one of the chief proponents for the Verdi celebrations, was asked to take part. He declined. Who can blame him?

● THE launch of the *New Grove Dictionary of Music* – all 29 volumes, at a hardback price of £2,950 – preoccupied the musical intelligentsia last week with the burning issue of who was in and with how many column inches. In fact the most striking thing about this new edition is that it has made a vigorous effort to move with the times. Hence the learned articles on Dolly Parton, Abba and the Andrews Sisters alongside more conventional entries on Bach and Beethoven.

Hence, too, the incredibly tacky launch party at the Wallace Collection. The party was accompanied by a rock-jazz band that played at volume while half the guests (musicians featured in *New Grove*) loudly complained that articles about them were inaccurate, and the other half (contributors to *New Grove*) loudly complained that they hadn't been paid.

"You can tell what's happened to Grove," said the cellist Julian Lloyd Webber, "from the tiny space they give my father [*the respected composer William LW*] and the great wadge they give my brother."

*'Lunchtime O'Boulez'*

# POPULAR LYRICS REVISITED

*...Well you came and you gave without taking*
*And I sent you away, oh Mandy*
*And you kissed me and stopped me from shaking*
*And I need you today, oh Mandy...*

— From *Mandy* by Barry Mandelson

## IN THE TEAROOM

**AFTER the raucous celebrations attending the ousting of Peter Mandelson, a sort of collective hangover has set in at the Labour end of the tearoom. Many MPs have begun to worry that they might have said something in their cups that they will have serious cause to regret. It's not as if a Mandy comeback is assured – even if he is 100 per cent vindicated by the Hammond inquiry. But the tone of the armchair soothsayers has changed markedly. The very people who only a week ago were gleefully certain that the former Northern Ireland secretary was a busted flush are now using phrases like "dead but not buried" or even "down but not out".**

The somewhat over-confident predictions that Mandy's career was irretrievably wrecked were based on Biblical authority: not even Lazarus managed a second comeback. But a key part of the "new" Labour project has always involved rewriting political scripture. And it is Mandy's central importance to that project that might yet bring about his miraculous resurrection.

It is a common mistake to imagine that the writer and pundit Robert Harris is Mandelson's only friend. There's also Renaldo, Carla Powell and Bobby the dog. But more importantly there is Tony Blair himself. The prime minister does not view politics as the media pundits do; nor, indeed as his cabinet colleagues do. He knows that without Mandy it will be difficult, perhaps impossible, to prevent his party reverting to type during a second term.

Together Blair and Mandy designed a romantic self-image for Labour politicians: they were to be men and women of destiny, noble pioneers of an exciting, modern, "third way". But the prime minister understands that deep down they remained a bunch of clapped out local government time servers and deadbeat trade union officials. Before Mandy shaved off their scrotty little moustaches and taught them how to comport themselves, they were completely unelectable and Blair fears they may quickly become so again.

As the prime minister looked around the table at his first post-Mandy cabinet, what did he see? Okay, he felt he could rely on Jack Straw, David Blunkett and new-best-friend Robin Cook to remain 1000 percent loyal… at least until the day for treachery arrives. Beyond – serried ranks of closet Brownites and politicians chiefly known for their "flexibility".

Let's face it; would you trust Stephen Byers or Alan Milburn who today spout "new" Labour platitudes with the same glib facility as yesterday when they spouted quasi-Marxist claptrap? For Blair it was business as usual, but without the reassuring presence of the only true believer. Already the PM is being pressed to consider making Mandy a European union commissioner. A big job like that might buy him off. But he's stalling because he knows he really needs him back.

*'Urquhart'*

**"NEW" Labour's Millbank HQ has reacted to Peter Mandelson's "resignation" by threatening to pour extra resources into the twice disgraced minister's Hartlepool seat to save Mandy from being given a good hiding by furious locals. But Mandelson was already in hot water in Hartlepool even before his latest brush with misfortune.**

Labour has lost control of the council and the Tories have selected well-known local businessman Gus Robinson – who once himself flirted with "new" Labour – as their election candidate. In recent days rumours have circulated that the great white hope Martin Bell may throw his hat in the ring, while in the red corner Arthur Scargill has thrown in his miner's helmet and announced that he will challenge Mandy for the Labour vote.

The most recent poll for the *Hartlepool Mail* had 60 percent of respondents saying they wouldn't be voting for Mandy at the next election. Mandy's up against it, all right!

**MEANWHILE Mandy's replacement at the Northern Ireland office, Dr John Reid, has troubles of his own as further evidence emerges of his bully boy attempts to frustrate an inquiry by the parliamentary standards commissioner, Elizabeth Filkin.**

Filkin's inquiry centred on claims that Reid, when Scottish secretary, and John Maxton, Labour MP for Glasgow Cathcart, had broken the rules by using funds earmarked for the Scottish parliament to supplement the salaries of three Labour party researchers. In an annex to her report Filkin concluded that both Reid and Maxton must have been aware of the arrangement, even if they had not been involved in its instigation.

Her view was based on the evidence of four senior Scottish Labour party officers: Alex Rowley, John Rafferty, Paul McKinney and Willie Sullivan. Ms Filkin also reported that "the conduct of Dr Reid caused serious and growing concern". She went on to say that: "I was left with the impression that many witnesses felt under considerable pressure as to what they should, or should not say to me, or whether, if at all they should co-operate with my inquiry."

The extent of that "pressure" is revealed in annex 171 in which Filkin writes: "21st March 2000. Willie Sullivan telephoned me having received my letter. He said he was very anxious about things because he believed he would be 'finished in the Labour Party' if he talked to me. I said I was sure that was not the case, and that the Standards and Privileges Committee had a majority of Labour members on it and they would be grateful and impressed if he were brave and informed me of what he knew. He said that it was the Labour majority that worried him, because he was sure that anything he said would leak into the party."

Sullivan's worst fears were soon confirmed: the privileges and standards committee voted on party lines and the Labour majority ruled that allegations against Reid and Maxton were "not proven".

**COME on down Adrian Montague, deputy chairman of Partnerships UK, the government body that pushes through private finance initiatives (PFIs). Montague has just landed another PFI job, this time as "private finance adviser" to transport supremo John Prescott and his sidekick "Lord" Gus McDonald.**

Montague has been brought in to try to rescue the ailing London Underground and air traffic privatisations. Oddly enough, this expert on bringing competition to public services keeps getting hired at public expense… without any apparent competition!

Prescott's department of the environment, transport and the regions (DETR) confirms that his new job, which pays £30,000 a year for one day's work a week, was again made without open competition. The fact that Prescott has turned to a City man rather than someone who knows about trains or planes shows again how PFIs are designed by bankers for bankers.

**THE excitement was palpable, the crowd of loyal Tories restless as Baroness Thatcher rose to speak to her old Finchley and Golders Green Conservative Association a fortnight ago.**

The tickets to the glittering events had sold like hot cakes – and now with more than 150 true blue loyalists gathered to welcome their former MP and prime minister at the Hendon Hall Hotel, the barking baroness rose to address them. "It is very good to be back in Dartford," she announced resolutely as her audience was reduced to a stunned silence.

**THE home office has made an early start planning the Queen's golden jubilee in 2002 having already convened (on 17 January) a London committee to prepare for the celebrations. Rustling up corporate sponsorship – royal flypast sponsored by the Hindujas, etc – takes time.**

The committee will need good relations with London mayor Ken Livingstone. How appropriate then that home secretary Jack Straw should make Lord Levene the committee chairman.

Levene was John Major's "efficiency adviser" (*yikes!*) and before that headed Margaret Thatcher's defence procurement team. He won this latter post as a former chairman of United Scientific Holdings – the tank manufacturer now known as Alvis.

Levene, one time mayor of the City of London, attacked Livingstone heavily in the campaign for London mayor. Ironically, given Levene's weapons-making past, he criticised Livingstone for apparently

## SPLIT personalities

Bob Moore

**Blue Peter Mandelson**

"supporting violence" by seeming to be sympathetic to anti-capitalist demonstrators. Will Livingstone and Levene be able to bury the hatchet to ensure a jolly, commercially-backed jubilee?

## BEYOND POLITICS

**NOW that Peter Mandelson hopes to enjoy a life beyond politics, where will he start? On past form, members of the Rothschild family can expect to hear from him before long.**

In the very week of his previous resignation two years ago, Mandelson was due to have lunch in the City with merchant banker Sir Evelyn de Rothschild. Most of the Rothschild-employed dignitaries who were due to attend suddenly developed Urgent Appointments Elsewhere when they heard of his disgrace, leaving Sir Evelyn and Mandy to lunch *à deux*.

Lo and behold, in March 1999 Mandy travelled to Madrid at the expense of *The Economist* (which is partly owned by Sir Evelyn de Rothschild, who chaired its board for 17 years). In April he went to Corfu and Albania, with travel and accommodation provided by Sir Evie's cousin Lord Rothschild. In May he enjoyed a freebie trip to the United States paid for by FirstMark Communications, a new telecomms company run by the American businesswoman Lynn Forester – who just happened to be de Rothschild's lover. (They were finally married on 30 November 2000.) And the following month Sir Evelyn de Rothschild, Lynn Forester and the tireless Mandy met up in Portugal for yet another all-expenses paid jaunt, this time to the secretive Bilderberg conference.

Alas, it seems that Lynn Forester may not be able to help Mandelson this time round. Her company FirstMark, which raised £600m last June for a huge expansion programme into Europe, announced two weeks ago that it is closing its London HQ and "dramatically reducing" its ambitions. Still, perhaps Sir Evie will offer the hapless ex-minister a seat on the board of N.M. Rothschild as a consolation prize.

## JUST FANCY THAT!

**WHERE does *Telegraph* hackette Alice Thomson get her ideas from? On 26 January she wrote in her "Friday Column" for the *Torygraph*: "Mr Mandelson had become Mr Blair's depleted uranium, supported in public, but potentially devastating."**

It is surely a coincidence that Simon Hoggart, political sketch-writer for the *Guardian*, wrote in his column the previous day: "At 3.31, the two men walked out, Mr Mandelson clutching the precious scarlet folder for the last time. Behind him were hundreds of Labour backbenchers, most of whom have always regarded him as the depleted uranium of the government – supported in public, lethal in practice"?

## ETHICS MAN

**DEMOTED foreign office minister Peter Hain, who was sent to energy in the post-Mandelson reshuffle, at least made a stab at rescuing his leftist credentials when he tried to restart Robin Cook's "ethical foreign policy" with his pamphlet *The End of Foreign Policy?* issued at the end of January.**

Hain argued that foreign policy should be based on principles of "global responsibility" and "ecological sustainability", not just self-interest, but he was packed off to the department of trade and industry before he could put any of these worthy aims in practice.

However, Hain had already undermined his message by issuing the pamphlet through Labour's favourite eco-group, the "Green Alliance". As the *Eye* has already pointed out, ordinary people can't join the alliance unless they are invited; but big corporations can – in return for cash. The alliance's longest running backer is none other than Rio Tinto, a firm so central to the Green Alliance that the press release for Hain's pamphlet had a bold footnote "supported by Rio Tinto".

Hain can look forward to many more corporate sponsorship opportunities at the DTI, however. On the day he issued his pamphlet, trade minister Richard Caborn announced government backing for the "Worldaware Awards". According to Caborn, these awards "recognise the contribution the private sector makes towards integrating developing countries into the global economy". Both the awards and the organisation itself are heavily corporate sponsored: the award for long-term commitment to the developing world is sponsored by Rio Tinto; and the award for sustainable development is sponsored by Shell. Worldaware's business programme is sponsored by British American Tobacco, leading to some absurd juxtapositions: Worldaware's magazine *Corporate Citizenship* gave coverage to the World Health Organisation's campaign against smoking – complete with a British American Tobacco logo at the foot of the page!

***'Backbiter'***

## TUC NEWS

**FEW TEARS are likely to be shed by members of the GMB in the Midlands over the premature departure of the union's Birmingham regional secretary, Ken Gregory.**

During his many years of loyal service, Gregory's antics helped contribute to a halving of GMB membership in Birmingham, the loss of thousands of pounds of union money to pay employment tribunal costs as well as, most damagingly, the erosion of the GMB's reputation in the Midlands.

Shortly before his departure Gregory, worried that a collection for a farewell present might not yield much more than a few coppers, such was his popularity, told staff there was no need to organise anything as he had "been well looked after". Puzzlement at what Gregory meant soon turned to anger when grassroots members learnt that the GMB's finance and general purposes committee, comprising three lay members and seven other regional secretaries, had agreed a £250,000 package for Brother Gregory, which included early retirement on a full pension and an £80,000 cheque in his back pocket.

## Number crunchings

**6,000**

■ jobs lost in the steel industry at Corus plc, much to the fury of "new" Labour

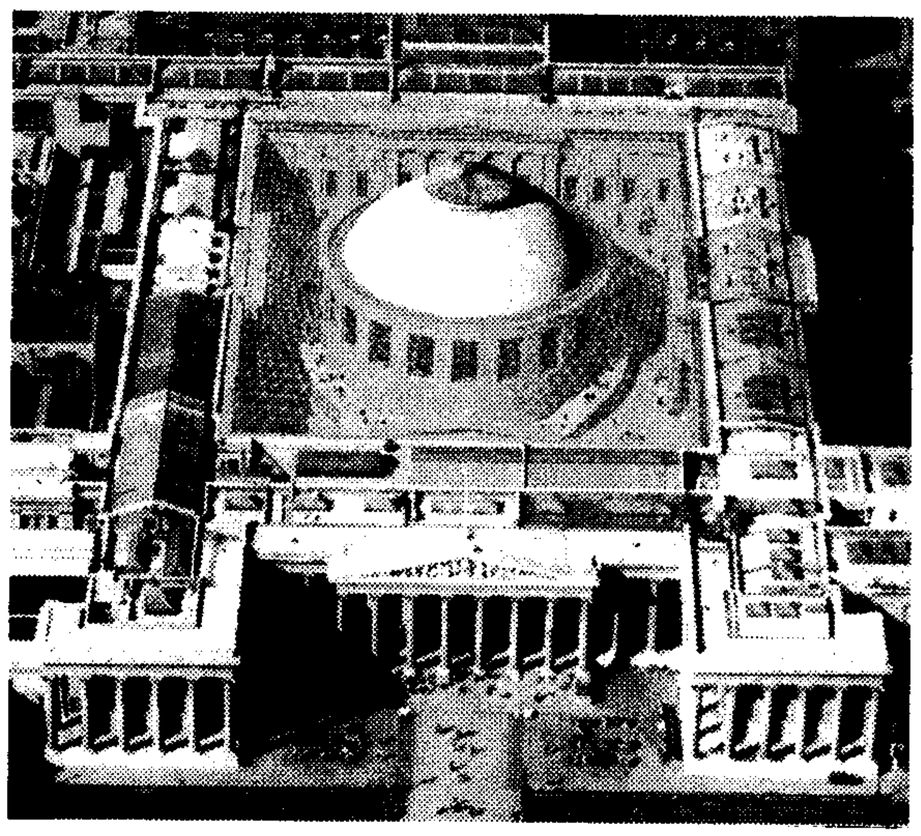
**6,000**

■ jobs lost if "new" Labour's anti-hunting bill goes through parliament

## NOOKS and CORNERS

**PERHAPS I awarded the Hugh Casson medal for last year to the wrong building: I have no doubt now it should have gone to the much-vaunted Great Court at the British Museum. The trouble was that this project was only finished and formally opened at the very end of 2000 — to a massive chorus of the usual gushing, uncritical praise heaped on My Lord Foster — and by then it had already had too much publicity owing to the controversy over the wrong, French stone being used instead of Portland on the new south portico (a scandal first exposed here).**

This stone business does not really affect the quality or otherwise of the £100m job that has added so much more in prestige and fees to the architects Foster & Partners: it was just important to expose the deception first perpetrated by the stone contractor and then mendaciously abetted by the British Museum trustees and their architects. More important is that the workmanship on the new stonework is not as good as on the original internal elevations by Sir Robert Smirke: the joints are too wide. But most important of all is the fact that the new so-called Great Court is vulgar and crude in both conception and execution and that the treatment of the surrounding grade I listed building is callous and inept.



There is nothing remarkable about the concept of reusing the large quadrangle originally designed by Smirke and soon filled by his brother, "Little Sid", with the Round Reading Room. Covering the space with a roof of iron and glass was first proposed in the 19th century and glazing over the area vacated by the move of the British Library was a feature of several of the entries in the 1993-94 competition.

The roof is undoubtedly the best part of the executed scheme, though it has no coherent relationship with the architecture below. But when it comes to the treatment of the Reading Room it can be seen that the architects had no constructive ideas.

Sidney Smirke's amazing and wonderful structure was originally a building with no exterior, for it was not meant to be seen from the outside and was surrounded by iron bookstacks. Instead of making the now free-standing object into coherent and dignified architecture, however, to relate it to the monumental elevations all around, all Foster & Partners could think of was to wrap it in a plain, flat, featureless skin of white stone. It is just boring.

Indeed, the whole space is bland and has all the glamour of a new shopping centre. Everything seems flat, white and over-lit. The floor is of polished limestone — French, naturally — and the junction between the repetitive grid of joints of the stones and the stonework of the vertical drum is, frankly, crude and painful (especially when you consider the cost). But the whole concept of a "Great Court" is a fraud as it is not a single great space, and what space there might have been has been reduced by wrapping the Round Reading Room (sorry: the Walter and Leonore Annenberg Centre) with an outer ring containing a staircase and, yes, shops. This outer ring is egg-shaped in plan and bulges towards the northern portico, reducing the space there to almost nothing.

The effect is further undermined by a nasty little bridge of steel and glass linking the upper level of the Reading Room with the north wing. Of course this bridge is steel and glass — in frank and fearless contrast to the old — as that is all our fashionable modern architects can do.

At the British Museum the problems begin on entry. It is wonderful to see the entrance hall and great staircase restored with the original polychromatic decoration (as is the interior of the Round Reading Room) — an obvious and civilised improvement which the museum authorities resisted for years but insisted upon by the Heritage Lottery Fund — but the effect is spoiled by the blaze of light pouring from the Great Court. This is because whereas Smirke provided one central door to the quadrangle on axis from the single entrance door, there are now three big openings. It is, of course, the aim of every museum director to get the public from the front door to the retail outlets as fast as possible.

It is important to appreciate, therefore, that the new south portico of the Great Court is *not* an accurate restoration of what stood there until the entrance hall was extended towards the Reading Room in 1875-77. This new portico extends further forwards to contain lifts (we don't mind that) but, above all, is pierced by three openings between the engaged Ionic columns rather than one. This does not work: that is, when you stand in the courtyard, you can see that the internal square piers which flank the great staircase obtrude into the vista through the outer openings. Smirke would not have done such a thing, but he was a serious and disciplined Classical architect. And then there is a gratuitous window above the central entrance, whose placing, proportion and crudeness makes one wince.

But I have left the worst until last. Originally there were steps leading down to reach the grass plots and gravel walks. This meant that the giant Ionic order which marches all around the Great Court could be seen rising from a plinth. No longer. So as to exploit the space beneath, the new floor of the Great Court has been raised and is placed at the level of the floor in the surrounding wings. Except that it isn't. The new shiny floor has turned out to be some two inches higher than plinth level. This means that the mouldings at the bases of columns and pilasters are sunk in a sort of trough round the edge of the space. The effect is disgusting, negating the effect of the order as a dynamic, controlling structural system.

If this discrepancy in level was an accident, then it exposes the ineptitude of the architects; if it was deliberate, it merely confirms their barbarism. I know not whether My Lord Foster understands or cares about such details but, with a budget of £100m, we surely could have expected better?

The damning PriceWaterhouseCoopers report concludes that the BM "has suffered reputational damage" over its behaviour with regard to the cheap stone. What ought to damage its reputation even more is that it was prepared to hand over a grade I building — the biggest and most monumental Greek Revival structure in the country — to an architect who, though showered with knighthoods, peerages and unstinting superstar adulation, is but a barbarian when it comes to understanding the eternal qualities of great architecture and simply cannot be trusted with an historic building.

● JACK STRAW's Castle is the highest pub in London, at the top of Hampstead village next to the Heath, where a pub has stood since at least 1713. It is also a most agreeable building to drink in and to look at. Seemingly a Georgian coaching inn, it in fact dates from 1962 and was designed by Raymond Erith, that subtle and most accomplished traditional architect. Indeed, to replace the earlier pub here destroyed by fire, Erith had to fight the Hampstead modernists who, parrot-like, cried for something "of our day and age". What a lucky escape. But now greedy Messrs Bass want to close the pub and sell it for conversion into expensive flats. This means spoiling both the interior — beautifully constructed of timber — and the exterior, which will be added to. Jack Straw's Castle is listed at grade II — it ought to be II* — but what is the point of listing if it cannot prevent a quite unnecessary change of use from the purpose for which the building was superbly designed, followed by damaging alterations?

***'Piloti'***

# FYE TV

**So Graham Norton (Channel 4)**
**Better Sex (Channel 4)**
**Position Impossible (Channel 4)**

**A STRANGE article appeared in the *Daily Mail* last week. Written by the novelist and critic Max Davidson, it waved the flag of surrender in one of the *Mail*'s most bitterly-fought wars. "Shock! Horror! The *Mail* now loves Channel 4", announced the headline.**

Davidson explained that the publication which, since 1982, had raged against Channel Swore, Channel 4-Letter and Channel Fore-Play – and which routinely called its last chief executive, Michael Grade, the Pornographer-In-Chief – had now recanted.

Under that nice, quiet Michael Jackson, Channel 4 had become "the channel of choice for the thinking middle-class... provocative without being outrageous... the television equivalent of Radio 4".

Well, with all the television viewing, Square Eyes may not listen to the wireless as often as he or she should, but is it really normal over on 198 long wave for Jenni Murray to make jokes about Posh Spice's vagina or for John Humphrys and Sue McGregor to invite the *Today* programme audience to send in pictures of the smallest willy or the longest foreskin they've ever seen?

It's hard to guess what the *Mail* is up to. The most Machiavellian explanation would be that Associated Newspapers hopes to buy Channel 4 if Hague is elected and if he fulfils his new manifesto pledge to privatise the station; but those are two of the biggest ifs since Rudyard Kipling's. The other possibility is that the paper, which never forgets its feuds, is having another swipe at Michael Grade by praising his successor.

The network is an extraordinary success story, but Jackson's strategy has been to balance intelligent programming against material more salacious than anything the older and rather more puritanical Grade would have contemplated. The unusually high ratings earned by the late-night stuff give the audience share a boost which allows greater seriousness in peak-time.

It's a clever strategy, but not one of which you would expect the *Daily Mail* to approve. The editor had better hope that not too many of his readers decide to check out this television equivalent of Radio 4. Denise Van Outen's *Something For The Weekend* – with its obsessive jokes about blow-jobs, ejaculation and penis size – is currently absent from the schedules, so presumably **So Graham Norton** is what the *Daily Mail* is thinking of in the "provocative but not outrageous" category of this 21st century rival to the old BBC Home Service.

Can you imagine Sue McGregor delivering this opening headline: "The theft of Posh Spice's luggage has left her without any knickers – police say it's the biggest *snatch* they've ever seen"? And is the following an example of what the *Mail* commended for being "quirky but not infantile"? Having delivered his slur on Mrs Beckham's pudenda, Norton headed into the audience, seeking anecdotes about "the most embarrassing thing that ever happened to you on your holidays". *Mail*-readers, used to the paper's travel pages with wry tales of ferry double-bookings and falling asleep under a hot sun and looking like a lobster, may have been surprised by the tale of the woman in the audience who went back to the flat of a bloke she met in Spain and was surprised to find that "his balls were bigger than his actual willy". And what would Tunbridge Wells make of the bloke who, having swapped partners with his friend on a drunken holiday, was startled to find a stranger in bed with them as well?

Later, Norton invited holiday photographs from the audience, including the elongated prepuce and the tiny penis referred to above. Great excitement was caused by a shot of several women squatting against a wall to piss. Just perfect for that Caught Short While Shopping feature in the next edition of *Femail*. Norton closed with the suggestion that Peter Mandelson had had to resign because of trying to cover up his mistake: "But that's Peter for you. As soon as he sees a cock up, he tries to sit on it."

Jackson's Channel 4 cleverly presents pornography as sex education. So the Sex Educator In Chief has just launched **Better Sex**, a series about ways of dealing with impotence which, in fact, allows the cameras to be present while two men answer questions about their history of penetration and failure and are then followed as they resume courting under medical advice, in a kind of *Blind Date* with latin terms instead of innuendo.

Confirming the strangeness of the *Mail*'s timing, the channel this week launches the kind of study of Asian culture which the paper used to dismiss as "political correctness" in Jeremy Isaacs' and Michael Grade's day. Under Michael Jackson's Radio 4/Channel 4, however, multicultural programming takes the form of **Position Impossible**, a study of the *Kama Sutra* presented by comedian Sanjeev Bhaskar from *Goodness Gracious Me*, a phrase which some *Mail*-reading grannies may be repeating without irony if they tune into this detailed account of why the one in which the woman wraps her legs around the man's neck draws on classical legend.

*'Square Eyes'*

# MEDIA NEWS

**"THERE is some distressing detail in this report – actually some of it too distressing to talk about at this time in the evening," observed a tastefully anguished Fiona Bruce as she anchored the BBC's *Six O'Clock News* coverage of the Alder Hey dead children story on 30 January.**

Having swept the details of her lead item under a comfy shag-pile carpet, Bruce turned to her next big story, the Indian earthquake that had so far claimed more than 100,000 lives, many of them, er, children. But there was no word of warning this time as she cued up a package from Brian Baron.

It opened with a tightly shot sequence of a boy screaming for painkillers as he lay trapped under rubble, waiting for doctors to cut off his leg – the first of many distressing details in the piece.

As the boy begged for water, Baron revealed that he was "trapped near the bodies of his parents and grandparents", but luckily for him doctors were at hand "having seen yesterday's BBC news footage", so he ought to be jolly grateful for the intrusion.

***COUNTDOWN* queen Carol Vorderman was star speaker at a House of Lords seminar on the internet in January, where she delivered an impassioned speech on the dangers posed to children by the presence of perverts and paedophiles on the world wide web.**

She reserved special criticism for BT which charges the police £130 every time they want to conduct a search to track down a paedophile on the web. The attack proved rather embarrassing for some of those present. One of the sponsors of the event, organised by the Cambridge-based Internet Watch Foundation, was... BT.

## DUMB BRITAIN

*It's Not The Answer, ITV*

**Nadia Sawalha**: Who was the first man to reach the South Pole?
**Contestant**: Sir Francis Chichester.
**Sawalha**: In which spa town did Marshall Petain set up his government in 1940?
**Contestant**: Bath.

*This Morning With Richard and Judy, ITV*

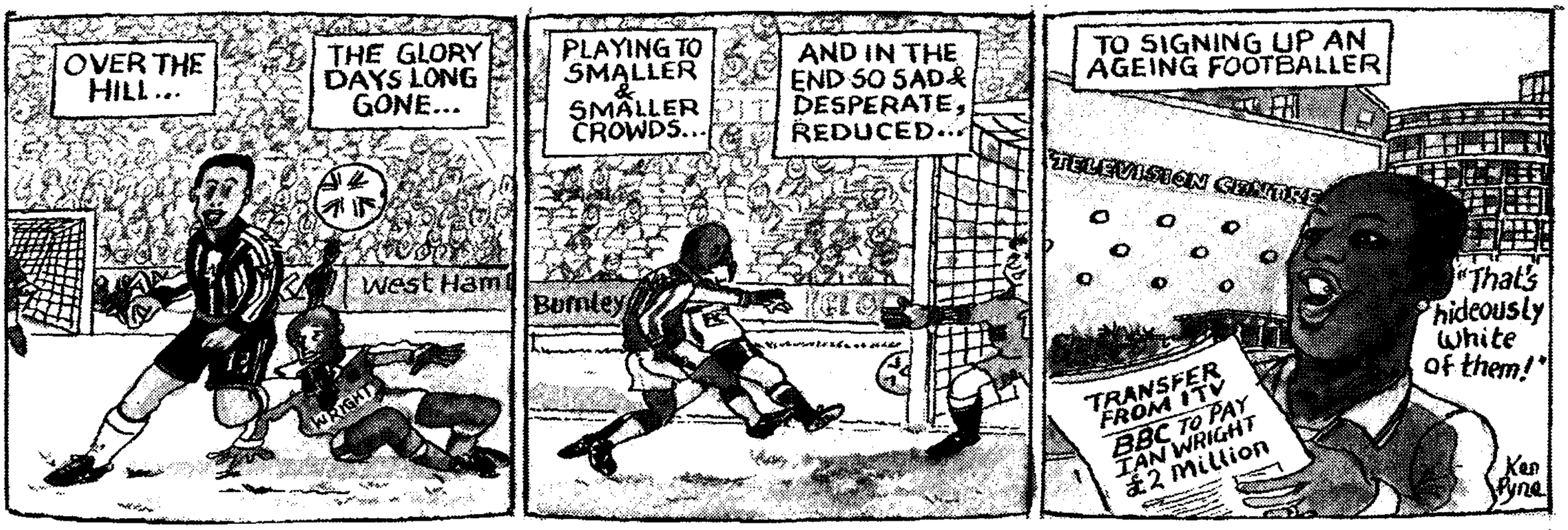
**Judy**: Which desert war did Britain take part in 10 years ago today?
**Contestant**: The Falklands.

*Family Fortunes, ITV*

**Les Dennis**: Name a TV show other than Family Fortunes with the word "family" in the title.
**Contestant**: The Generation Game.

*The Weakest Link, BBC*

**Anne Robinson**: In *Alice in Wonderland*, which creature does the Mad Hatter pour tea on to to wake him up?
**Contestant**: A dog.
**AR**: Which British composer took the music for *Land of Hope and Glory* from his Pomp and Circumstance marches?
**Contestant**: Tchaikovsky.


OVER THE HILL...
THE GLORY DAYS LONG GONE...
West Ham
WRIGHT
PLAYING TO SMALLER & SMALLER CROWDS...
AND IN THE END SO SAD & DESPERATE, REDUCED...
Burnley
TO SIGNING UP AN AGEING FOOTBALLER
TELEVISION CENTRE
TRANSFER FROM ITV
BBC TO PAY IAN WRIGHT £2 Million
"That's hideously white of them!"
Ken Pyne

# GOING LIVE

**FOR *BBC Breakfast* on 30 January, Michael Peschard tried to illuminate the Hinduja passport affair taking viewers live to a reporter at a darkened Palace of Westminster.**

"Laura, what can you tell us about MI6's involvement?" he asked.

"Not a lot – they're a fairly secretive organisation," came the reply.

Earlier, on 24 January, BBC News 24 had offered a priceless insight from Carolyn Quinn, *going live* to Peter Mandelson's home in Notting Hill. "Carolyn, is Peter Mandelson there?"

"No."

**WHILE five nights of *Emmerdale* a week has done wonders for ITV's total audience share, ABC1 viewers are fleeing the channel in droves, especially at peaktime.**

Now advertisers are showing signs of having had enough and are demanding a closer input into what goes on air. There will be more emphasis on "seasons" that tie in with product launches – cops flying around in new Vauxhalls, etc.

Look out too for new "vehicles" for box-office actors. That means more work for Ross Kemp, Robson Green and John Thaw, the latter appreciated by many for his acting talent but by advertisers for something far more important: "Thaw brings out upmarket English womanhood like beaters at an Edwardian pheasant shoot," according to a Zenith Media report. Ads for Oil of Olay, chocolates and Tampax can thus join the burgers, lager and sportswear mix.

There will also be more "updating" of regular offerings too. Already *The Bill* has been transformed from a streetwise series about plods into a bizarre world of suits, office politics and power dressing. Audience profile, not audience size is the key to the unwelcome change. ABC1s wear suits not uniforms.

If this sort of targeting carries on for much longer, the BBC will be able to claim that it has retaken the quality high ground by default.

**RED faces at Granada TV, where the investigative sleuths of *Tonight with Trevor MacDonald* and the former *World in Action* have unknowingly been sitting on a rather splendid scoop for more than two years.**

The embarrassment began when a viewer rang Granada and asked why, in all the television coverage there has been of the case of mass killer Dr Harold Shipman, one only ever sees one short news clip of the doctor, shot when he was confronted by reporters shortly before his arrest in 1998. "Because that's all there is," the viewer was told. "No it isn't," she said. "Shipman was interviewed for a *World in Action* programme in the 1980s. I know because I was in it, too."

A trawl through the dusty archives soon revealed that the viewer was correct. The *World in Action* broadcast on 22 March 1982, called "Home Help", took as its subject the "care in the community" of emotionally distressed patients and included scenes shot at a clinic in Hyde, Cheshire – handy for Granada's Manchester HQ. One of the local doctors interviewed was one Harold Shipman, then aged 36 and now suspected by police of already having embarked on a killing spree that may have totalled more than 300 victims.

Granada bosses are not only embarrassed about the missed scoop and the thought of all the dosh sales of the footage around the world would have brought in during and after last year's trial – "think of a number with lots of noughts in it", one insider told the *Eye*. The researcher on the programme was one Gayle Broughall. Ms Broughall has since left Granada, but her husband still works for them. He happens to be Steve Morrison, Granada Media's chief executive.

One other difficulty faces the producers of *Tonight*, who are understandably eager to air their, er, scoop at long last. Given Dr Shipman's habit of bumping off his patients, it has been thought prudent to check whether those who appeared on the programme are still alive.

**INFOGRAMES, the French-based computer games giant, will have been embarrassed to learn that one of the games it inherited in its recent acquisition of the interactive arm of US toy-makers Hasbro has an unexpected added extra.**

"B-17 Flying Fortress: The Mighty 8th" is a game for all ages which simulates a Second World War bombing campaign. It was developed by a British firm, Wayward Design. In the rush to release the game in time for Christmas, Hasbro cut several promised features and failed to test properly for bugs. Following a deluge of complaints and a petition by gamesters, Hasbro finally announced that it would bring out a "patch" – a programme to deal with the bugs – on 1 February.

Players will either be pleased or disappointed to learn that the patch will also correct a rogue file which found its way into the original game, containing a large number of links to internet porn sites.

## AD NAUSEAM

**LAGER ads have always been a bit of a litmus test for whether advertising agencies have had any good ideas recently. Because it's lads who drink lager, they're a chance for adland to try something a bit risqué, allowing the creatives to be a bit creative for once and tell a few jokes about footie, farting and birds.**

Say Carling Black Label or Heineken and slogans and ditties materialise effortlessly thanks to all those classic spots that adorned advertising's golden age in the 80s. In comparison the new batch is pretty thin gruel.

To start with the once-great Carling, the new catch is… well, there isn't one. Instead, we've got an "idea", which is to use the "-ing" in Carl-ing and then flick through a thesaurus finding (there's one) words that end in –ing. Then, add an image or short film that, like, kind of connects the -ing word with a pint of lager. One of the posters has a man debating (there's another) how he can get to the contents of an upturned pint on a table, with the -ing word in this case being "Irritating". *Et voila*: the first ever ad campaign that passes judgement on itself.

You might wonder why Carling has changed tack from the whole "I bet he drinks…" line, dreamt up by its old agency WCRS that served it so well for decades. Blame the Leith Agency, so original it is based in Edinburgh, for this sorry new tack. It's Leith's first work for Carling, and smacks of the dreaded "Let's have a big idea" syndrome, where agencies kid themselves (and clients) that the consumer wants something clever as opposed to something amusing. A good "idea" means some anodyne conceit that can be drawn out ad nauseam. Which means a reliable revenue stream for the Leith Agency.

M&C Saatchi continues its mission to destroy Fosters' impressive brand heritage with its new posters for Fosters' Amber lager. Obviously the idea is to get away from the bonzer dumb Aussie-machismo thing that worked so well for years at BMP, instead trying to sell lager to the ladies. But how do you do that? M&C certainly doesn't seem to know – tagline: "Lager, but more laid back". Will-this-do illustration: a cat and a dog leaning over (ie laid back). Which makes Paul Hogan appear very funny indeed.

The future for every advertiser's favourite account looks even bleaker, not just because no one appears to be able to come up with any decent wisecracks, but because it looks like alcohol advertising is the next target for that pesky meddling European commission, which keeps spoiling everyone's fun by pointing out that if we're going to ban fags then booze will have to be next.

## CEEFUX

***"High winds and rain have led to flooding on many rural roads and low-lying areas. Drivers are advised to take extra car."***

— *Ceefax*, page 437, 2 January

# Pseuds Corner

**Günter Grass – The pain that runs through my being**

**Strapline on front page of *Guardian***

The first piece, Pa amb tomaquet, is a video depicting a bizarre rite of preparation. La Ribot crumbles up a garlic clove and scrubs it vigorously over her body. She then smears on ripe tomatoes, and finally gives herself a thorough drizzling of olive oil. It's a fusion of cookery, ablution and erotic foreplay which becomes a

joke about women getting ready for consumption, but it also primes us for the see-sawing relationship we develop with La Ribot during her live show, a relationship both intimate and neutral...

We follow her obediently around the gallery and respond with almost childlike promptness to her cues – grinning as she smiles at us, feeling collective emotions of shock, scepticism, interest. In her final piece, having drunk a litre of water, La Ribot wraps herself in foil and lies on the floor. We all, simultaneously, wonder if she's going to pee. By the time we realise she isn't, we're all thinking that it wouldn't be such a big deal if she did.

**JUDITH MACKRELL**
**Guardian**

Met Office

Our new logo is ambitious and energetic. It emphasises movement and energy, implying we are entering a period of change. Dark blue is a colour which has been found to inspire trust, but it is also generally associated with the weather, sky and the sea. Green is generally associated with the natural environment. The waves are inspired by the multi-layered 'geological' formation of the Earth's surface; they could also represent wind, hills, valleys or mathematical functions. The waves could also be likened to the rivers, or the sea, representing our heritage – the Met Office was formed in 1854 by Admiral FitzRoy to provide sea-current forecasts to mariners.

Different people will see different things in the design of our new logo, but we think it sums up the main goals we're working towards in our vision for the future of the Met Office.

**Barometer: News from the Public Met. Service**

**Arrested development or the queerness of savages: resisting evolutionary narratives of difference**
NEVILLE HOAD
Erratum Volume 3, Number 2, July 2000, Pages 133-134

*The following text was printed incorrectly:*
The narrative hierarchizes difference, doing violence by a *priori* constituted by *progress* through its various others, which are then posited as vestigial, arrested, anachronistic or degenerate.

*It should have read:*
The narrative hierarchizes difference, doing violence, by a *priori* incorporation, to the others in the constitution of the *subject*. The *subject* is constituted by progress through its various others, which are then posited as vestigial, arrested, anachronistic or degenerate.

**Postcolonial Studies**

*Today, it [public relations] should be a sophisticated marketing discipline which transcends both specific vertical and horizontal management boundaries.*

**Kingfisher PR website company profile**

CONTRIBUTORS: Strobes, Peter Barnes, John Harthman, Alan Bullion, David Kavanagh.

**£10 paid for entries**

# DOING THE ROUNDS

## Organ retention

**HEALTH secretary Alan Milburn and his chief medical officer (CMO) Liam Donaldson profess to be "surprised" and "outraged" at the findings of the organ retention inquiry. But isn't it the job of the health secretary and his CMO to know if an "appalling scandal" has been going on for years in the NHS' (and Europe's) biggest children's hospital?**

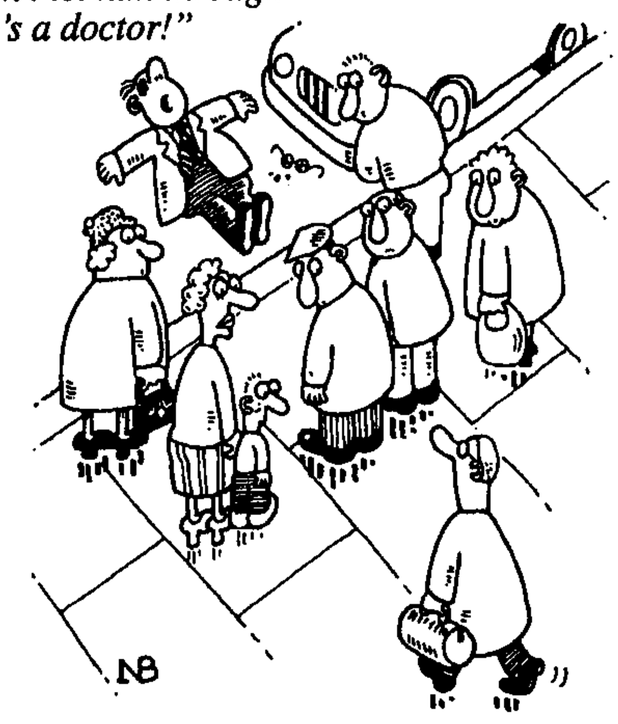
As the proud owner of a medical degree, Donaldson has doubtless sat in pathology museums surrounded by samples in specimen pots retrieved with only a cursory nod towards consent. Did he express his surprise and outrage then? I suspect not. As in previous scandals, the NHS and department of health would have let it all slip by unnoticed were it not for the resolute determination of aggrieved patients and relatives. Only when the balloon finally goes up do politicians express outrage, without even hinting at their own accountability.

One person unlikely to let them off the hook so easily is Professor Ian Kennedy, chair of the much delayed Bristol inquiry. It was his interim report (www.bristol-inquiry.org.uk) that sparked off the organ retention investigation, but Kennedy is a far bigger hitter than Alder Hey inquiry chairman Michael Redfern QC, who has allowed pathologists to carry the can for what is a systematic failure to legislate and monitor the system.

A quarter of a century ago Kennedy had a paper published in *Medicine Science and Law* entitled "Further Thoughts on Liability for Non-observance of the provisions of the Human Tissue Act 1961", in which he lambasted the law regulating the removal of tissue from human corpses. The law states that doctors have to make a "reasonable inquiry" to establish that there are no objections to organ retrieval. But what constitutes "reasonable"?

It is junior doctors, not pathologists, who have for years been dumped with this dilemma as they try to obtain consent for post mortem examinations. Often they are untrained, unfed and unaware of the legal and moral issues. Small wonder the standards of informed (or rather presumed) consent are so variable. And it'll take far more than Milburn's proposed "new consent form" to put this right. But Kennedy also spotted that there was little legal redress for doctors who chose to ignore the act and remove tissue without consent, a situation he described as "well nigh extraordinary".

*"Don't let him through – he's a doctor!"*



"If the provisions laboriously set out in the act purporting to regulate the conditions under which tissue could be removed from a corpse were intended to have any effect, then parliament should be made to realise that there is no clear way in which this effect can be achieved and it remains a matter for conjecture, in fact, whether the provisions need be followed or whether they can be ignored with impunity."

Kennedy urged parliament to act promptly to consider this matter. Twenty five years and much impunity later, it probably will do.

● ON THE matter of Bristol (where Kennedy also has a commendable track record), the final report is already six months late. Rumour has it that Kennedy's criticisms of the NHS and department of health are so pungent the government is keeping him firmly gagged until the last vote is counted. And that'll be just nine years after the *Eye* broke the story...

*M.D.*

# SIGNAL FAILURES

## Focus on ostriches

**THE biggest crisis in the history of British trains has proved insufficient to convince the government it must do something about the railways.**

Since the Hatfield crash ministers have struggled to sound vaguely plausible while arguing that (a) the railways are a mess and desperately need sorting out and (b) there's nothing wrong that Railtrack and the existing companies can't put right.

The problem is that the government wants to blame the rail industry, but doing so implies that the government must sort out said industry. Last month, for example, transport minister Lord Macdonald of Roadlobby said, with a perfectly straight face, that he was confident Railtrack could manage the network effectively. But he also said the government had to bring back coherence and leadership to Britain's rail network. So that's all clear, then.

Finding himself on this sticky wicket Macdonald hit the rail industry's panic button, marked "blame BR" and worn smooth from overuse by Richard Branson, GNER and, after Hatfield, even John Prescott. "What we are dealing with is a crisis of under-investment," said Macdonald. Oh yeah? The main problems highlighted by Hatfield and the aftermath are the rail industry's shambolic structure and management, its blame culture, greed, lack of care, poor communication, disrespect for the railway's traditions and its abandoning of technical research. Under-investment comes way down the list this time.

If Macdonald really wants the government to bring coherence and leadership to the railways, why hasn't he told strategic rail authority chairman Alastair Morton? The SRA dropped its "shadow" prefix last week, but the signs are it will have the same blind faith in the ability of a ragbag of accountants, lawyers and busmen to run a national rail system that its Opraf predecessor and the last Tory government had.

Morton has been desperate to convince the rail industry the SRA is not about controlling and commanding, and the SRA is still treading water on what is purported to be a strategy for the railways. A strategy and leadership are badly needed, not only by passengers but by the rail companies who have wasted lots of time and cash trying to guess what the SRA's strategy might be, only to discover the SRA doesn't have such a thing and doesn't want radical departures.

So we now have the strange position where the Tories are the only players publicly acknowledging the railway is an almighty cock-up. And if they won an election, how long would it take them to decide that nothing much needs doing to the railways after all?

● EVEN the harshest critic of Virgin Trains has to acknowledge its creative brilliance. Last week Virgin explained that trains were running late due to its trying to run the normal timetables.

Virgin's creative minds also came up with this month's offer of half-price travel. The offer sounds marvellous – until passengers realise many journeys are back to roughly what they cost before Virgin took over (and when the service was far more reliable).

Virgin didn't need to resort to creativity at the height of the rail crisis. With Railtrack taking all the flak, Virgin's embarrassing problems with rolling stock went unnoticed. Many Virgin trains were grounded because of flood-related defects – while First Great Western and Midland Mainline kept identical trains going in similar conditions.

The rash of cancelled trains and Virgin's ludicrous ticket restrictions forced many people to cancel journeys, but Virgin told one *Eye* reader it had taken on no extra staff to deal with the refund claims. The reader demanded a refund last year after spending £200 on two tickets on the strength of wrong information from Virgin. Although Virgin had debited his bank account in an instant, he was told the refund would take five weeks. Five weeks and one large Visa bill later, Virgin informed him he would get his money back after it had earned Virgin another six to eight weeks' interest.

*'Dr B. Ching'*

# DOWN ON THE FARM

**IT IS almost a year since dour academic zoologist Prof Sir John Krebs was wheeled on to head of the government's new Food Standards Agency, which began work on 1 April last year. In the name of "building consumer confidence", the guiding principle of his new agency would be "transparency", he said.**

Nothing has given Sir John more headaches in his first year than that central part of his new empire, the controversial Meat Hygiene Service, responsible for enforcing EU food safety rules on Britain's meat industry.

First, when he took over, much of the industry was about to be driven out of business by a further huge rise in inspection charges, demanded by Brussels. Second, he needed to prepare the industry for stage one of "the greatest revolution in food law in 25 years", the EU's bizarre new HAACP food safety system, developed by NASA to ensure sterile food for astronauts. Third, last April Sir John was faced with a particular embarrassment when the respected Mead Webber abattoir in Herefordshire dramatically shut down in protest at the high-handed behaviour of one of his hygiene service vets, at a cost of 41 jobs and millions of pounds in lost business.

The answer to the first problem, the crisis which threatened to close more than 200 of Britain's surviving smaller abattoirs, was to set up two inquiries under Colin Pooley and Colin Maclean. These came up with a stack of proposed reforms, including a long-overdue formula for reducing charges to smaller slaughterhouses. But to resolve the endless acrimonious disputes between MHS vets and meat plant operators, it was also recommended that a new form of independent arbitration should be introduced to avoid the MHS being the sole arbiter in its own case. This proposal, universally welcomed by the industry, the FSA has now said it cannot accept, presumably since independent arbitration might expose to public gaze just how badly its vets perform.

As for the curious way the FSA is imposing HAACP on the industry, the official body representing the meat inspectors who work under the vets recently wrote to Sir John claiming the new system would be unworkable. Furthermore, they protested, "this entire process has been shrouded in secrecy, with negotiations both in Europe and the UK being carried out behind closed doors by officials of MAFF and the department of health. We believe this is totally unacceptable and falls far short of the promise of openness under which the FSA was founded".

Finally, when it came to the Mead Webber dispute, Sir John was eventually forced to agree this should be investigated by an independent tribunal. The FSA was supposed to have produced its case last autumn. But the MHS's tortuous justification of its conduct only finally surfaced last month. And now Sir John's officials are hinting they may not allow an independent tribunal to look into this embarrassing episode after all.

How curious that, in all three major opportunities the FSA has so far had to demonstrate its commitment to "transparency", the score should be "FSA 3, Transparency 0".

*'Even Newer Muckspreader'*

# Down on the Fish Farm

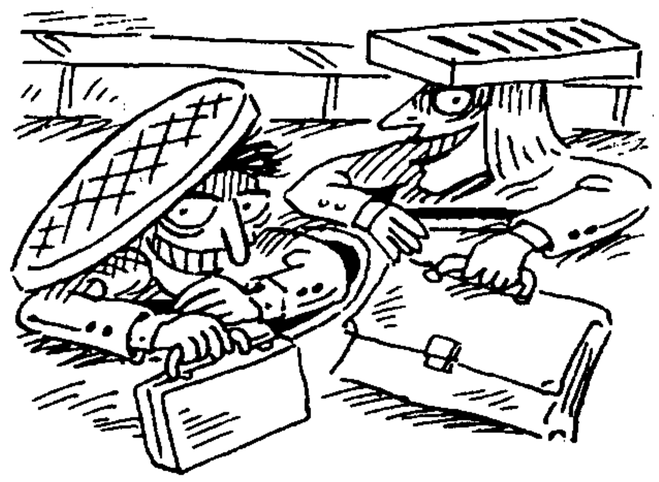
**IS fake salmon from Scotland safe to eat? The official line insists that farm salmon is "nutritious, delicious and healthy". So why does Professor Hugh Pennington – the expert microbiologist of e.coli fame – advise consumers to limit consumption of oily fish to just one portion per week?**

Are PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) and dioxins in fish and shellfish a danger to human health? The Norwegian Society for Conservation of Nature (NNV) thinks so. It says "at least 40,000 Norwegians" could be at risk of health damage because of PCBs and dioxins in fish and shellfish. It alleges PCB levels may cause foetal damage and learning difficulties in children.

The Norwegian food control authority has circulated 10,000 questionnaires with a view to testing blood, urine and hair samples and correlating results with the consumption of seafood and game. But the NVV has demanded the Norwegian government starts work immediately on "cleaning up polluted fjords and harbours". Meanwhile in Scotland, where about 50 percent of fake salmon farms are Norwegian owned, it is, er... business as usual.

*'Old Trout'*

## ROTTEN BOROUGHS



# LOST IN THE MAIL

SKELETONS continue to tumble from Flintshire county council's cobwebby cupboards.

A district auditor's report details how the Labour council lost £700,000 on an ill thought-out scheme to build a Royal Mail headquarters on a farm it leased, River Lane, with the help of a pile of "economic development" dosh from the Welsh office. A second farm, a few miles away at Malpas in Cheshire, was bought for £610,000 at auction so the council could relocate its agricultural tenant.

Alas the scheme was always going to be a non-starter: the owners of River Lane's freehold were barred from speculative developments by the terms of a trust; and the Royal Mail was in any case more interested in another site in Chester. None of this stopped the Labour council's then leader Tom Middlehurst and chief executive Phillip McGreevy going ahead with the property swap, though.

When the deal fell through the council's internal auditor Andy Sutton investigated and found that the chief property services officer, Paul Kent, had been guilty of gross misconduct, a decision upheld at a disciplinary hearing in April 1999. When Kent protested, the council decided to hear his appeal while Sutton – the most important witness - was in America on a holiday booked months earlier. Surprise, surprise: the gross misconduct verdict was overturned and Kent was reinstated.

Middlehurst and McGreevy get off lightly in the district auditor's report. It merely notes that the affair was not well managed and that a secret meeting between the pair, when they decided to go ahead with the crazy scheme, was not minuted "so there was no formal record of the matters discussed or actions agreed".

Yet it would be premature for Middlehurst, now a Welsh assembly member, or Flintshire to assume the problem has gone away. Inspector Dai Knacker is on the case.

# VANDALS RUN AMOK

AT LEAST Lambeth knows what its priorities are. With a £10m budget gap looming, the possibility of a large council tax hike and the resignation of chief financial officer Michael Crich, it has spent £50,000 on a new logo, launched at the Royal Festival Hall last month.

In its enthusiasm the borough seems to have forgotten that it will cost millions more to emblazon new street signs, business cards, council vehicles and stationery. Meanwhile the housing benefit backlog, created by contractor Crapita, still stands at more than 11,000 items. Not to mention the collapsing social services department, the neglected parks, the crumbling housing...

**PS:** Lambeth has just approved a plan to merge two primary schools, which will entail concreting over most of one of north Lambeth's last grassy open spaces. As sports minister and local MP Kate Hoey said, she was "absolutely ashamed" that a Labour council could perpetrate such "vandalism".

# COSY COTTAGE

THE unveiling of a plaque in north London before Christmas to commemorate the 30th anniversary of Britain's first gay rights protest attracted little press attention — to the relief of many at slightly-less-loony Islington council.

The plaque, paid for by gay lib veteran Andrew Lumsden, was mounted "with the help and permission" of the council on, er, a public toilet on Highbury Fields which had been the focus of protests against a police entrapment operation against "cottagers" in 1970. As Outrage's Peter Tatchell put it, that demo had been "the moment... gay men got up off their knees".

● **NOWHERE is the saying "where there's muck there's brass" more apposite than Southwark. The man in charge of refuse collection, Peter O'Connell, has left the council with a bulging black binliner containing his £45,113.04 payoff. This comprises £20,408.28 redundancy, £10,741.20 severance and £13,963.56 in lieu of notice. The "lieu of notice" bit is puzzling. After leaving Southwark on a Friday night, O'Connell started work as head of cleansing services at Westminster the following Monday.**

# AD ENOUGH

ON 14 January the *Observer* carried reports about the background to the death of eight-year-old Anna Climbie, murdered in Tottenham last year by her aunt and boyfriend after months of "unimaginable abuse".

Everyone agreed that huge blame rested with Haringey council's incompetent and slovenly social services department. It was not the best of timing, therefore, for Haringey to place a large ad in the same issue of the *Obs* for an assistant director of children's services at £60,000 a year. The ad said "we acknowledge that our services could be improved" — which must surely rank as understatement of the year. And the headline — "Haringey — the performing council" – was less than appropriate too.

# BONES OF CONTENTION

DOVER'S "new" Labour council is threatening to dig up the body of a woman whose dying wish — to be buried in her own garden — was carried out in defiance of the heavy-handed actions of the local authority.

Ruth Lee died of cancer in January 2000. She had expressed a wish to be buried in the garden along with family pets. Initially both the council and the Environment Agency had no objections. Dover council then did a U-turn and took out an injunction to prevent the burial on the grounds that it would reduce the value of the Lees' former council house and neighbouring properties.

Mrs Lee's body remained in the mortuary of Dover's Buckland Hospital until Friday 22 December, when her husband Terry removed it with a view to using it to highlight his plight before having a temporary burial at a North Yorkshire nature reserve and "green burial" ground.

But the authorities had other ideas. That night, alerted by the council, eight police officers descended on his house to see what he was doing with the body. Undeterred, he drove to London the next day and posed for photographs outside Downing Street with a coffin containing his wife's frozen body — the coffin being wrapped briefly in Christmas paper to attract the attention of Fleet Street snappers.

Back in Dover that evening two more police officers came calling, along with an environmental health officer, a psychiatric social worker and a consultant in communicable diseases. They eventually left to get a JP's warrant to gain entry to his home, while Mr Lee left to seek refuge at his daughter's house nearby.

While he was there, in the early hours of Christmas Eve, "persons unknown" buried Mrs Lee in her garden before the authorities returned. And there she remains. The council is continuing to hound Mr Lee, bombarding him with visits from officials and tormenting him with threats to exhume his wife's body because of fears over disease.

Mr Lee is backed by the Yorkshire-based AB Wildlife Trust, whose founder John Bradfield told the *Eye*: "We estimate there are up to 200 garden burials a year, and there has not been a single instance of any disease because there are no diseases you're going to get from a body." This is believed to be the first time a council has acted to prevent a garden burial.

# High Principals

DAVID EADE, principal of Barnsley College, was so furious when the *Eye* revealed in June 1999 that the college was investigating a whistleblower's allegations concerning a company he had set up to run college franchise operations, that he complained (without result) to the press complaints commission (PCC).

By July 1999 his indignation over the scurrilous claim that he had approved a £21,000 loan from the company, Progress Training, to a surfing magazine run by his step-children, seemed to be justified when his trusty sidekick and clerk to the college corporation Ann Oldroyd wrote in the *Barnsley College News*: "The college has met to consider the results of the investigation and found the allegations to be unsubstantiated. The College Corporation has decided to take no further action."

But that was not the end of the matter. In November 2000 Progress went into liquidation when the FEFC announced a £6m cut in the college budget following a change in government policy towards franchise operations (see *Eye* 1016). In the meantime Eade had gone off sick, so it was left to the acting chief executive, Michelle Squires to clear up the mess. So far she has had little success. In December 2000 the FEFC demanded a further £1.5m refund after a series of accounting errors was revealed. And now the liquidators for Progress, BKR Haines Watts, have presented the college with another bill for £1.5m.

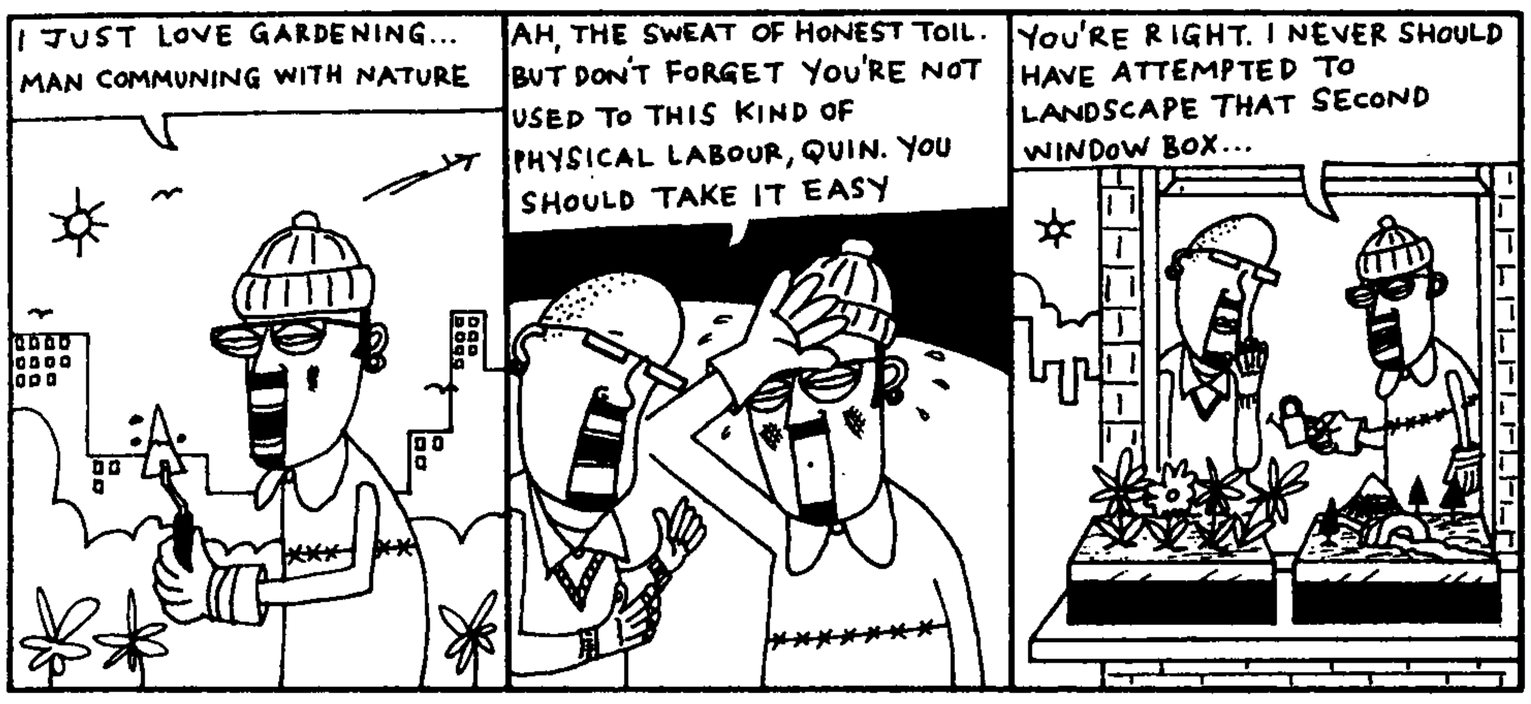
A new set of allegations by anonymous whistleblowers has also emerged. The FEFC is taking these so seriously it has installed an inquiry team in Barnsley's Queen's Hotel, where college staff have been invited to meet the investigators or to send written statements. This is only the second time in the history of the FEFC that an inquiry of this nature has taken place. One of the matters under investigation is whether £20,000 claimed from the funding council for providing distance learning courses was in fact spent on buying 13 paintings by local artist Ashley Jackson.

The terms of reference of the investigation state that it is also looking into allegations concerning the purchase of £20,000 worth of open learning materials, a car hire invoice for £987, and whether any relationships exist "between these allegations and those received previously," or "between the college, its staff and Progress Training Limited".

It is not yet known whether Eade, who has been on sick leave from his £101,000 a year job for nearly a year, will be well enough to cooperate with the investigation, although he recently recovered sufficiently to put his name down as 50 percent shareholder of a new company, Axion Services. The investigation team is keen to point out, however, that its inquiries into Eade's role in the whole sordid affair will not be in any way influenced by the fact that he sits on the executive council of... the FEFC!

## IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON

KNIFE & PACKER


I JUST LOVE GARDENING... MAN COMMUNING WITH NATURE
AH, THE SWEAT OF HONEST TOIL. BUT DON'T FORGET YOU'RE NOT USED TO THIS KIND OF PHYSICAL LABOUR, QUIN. YOU SHOULD TAKE IT EASY
YOU'RE RIGHT. I NEVER SHOULD HAVE ATTEMPTED TO LANDSCAPE THAT SECOND WINDOW BOX...

# Letters

## Cutting remarks

*Sir,*

*I have just finished reading an urgent report I commissioned into the so-called practice of "operating" being perpetrated, as you read this, in hospitals up and down the country. It is one of the most grotesque and grisly pieces of literature I have ever set eyes upon. It would appear that on a daily basis trusting patients are being put to sleep, whereupon sick and twisted individuals calling themselves doctors perform the most hideous mutilations upon their bodies with sharpened instruments.*

*It speaks volumes of the unbearable arrogance of the medical profession that it could think it would get away with such unspeakable barbarism on such a large scale. The medical profession must disavow itself of this disgustingly misguided "doctor-knows-best" paternalism that deludes itself that these ghoulish "procedures" are somehow good for us. Let me assure the British public that I will not rest until this affront to all that is decent has been swept from every corner of our hospitals, and those would-be Dr Frankensteins responsible have been brought to task.*

*Yours faithfully,*
*ALAN MILLBANK-CLONE,*

*Dept of Ill-Health,*
*(aka IAN HAGAN, Edinburgh).*

## Grave injustice

*Sir,*

*As a resident of Bedfordshire I live in the catchment area of the hospital whose boss was recently sacked after the remains of several loved ones were found in the hospital's "chapel of rest".*

*There is worse – so far unreported. The locals are agog with rumours that the hospital has been handing over loved ones to shady characters who have horrifyingly put them in holes in the ground and left them to rot – or have even incinerated them. They (the shady characters) are said to have demanded money, seldom less than £1000, and sometimes much more, from the loved ones' loved ones.*

*Will the government investigate these terrifying allegations, or will this be another pre-election cover-up?*

*Yours,*
*JOHN ADAMS,*

*Biggleswade, Beds.*

**All-night ordeal in bog for pensioner**

*New Milton Advertiser*

## Corus of disapproval

*Sir,*

*This ditty has been doing the rounds within Corus:*

*Little Brian Moffat*
*Sat counting his profit*
*Cutting the jobs away*
*Along came a Dutchman*
*Said "Thanks very much man"*
*That's really f***ed up the UK.*

*Yours,*
*PISSED-OFF STEELIE,*

*Via email.*

## Lookalike

**Frankenstein**

**Martin Amis**

*Sir,*

*Don't you think there is an uncanny resemblance between Frankenstein's monster and the embalmed-looking Martin Amis, author of 'Dead Babies'?*

*How often does he need to plug his fingers in the alternating current? I think we should be told.*

*Yours truly,*
*ROGER LEWIS,*

*Bromyard, Herefordshire.*

## Man in a million

*Sir,*

*Following the precedent of naming sums of money after politicians (ie, £2000 is now "an Archer"), shouldn't "new" Labour's love of large, round, seven figure sums be similarly marked?*

*Given that £1,000,000 "donations" to "new" Labour or pet projects have resulted in the (probable) banning of hunting with dogs, an exception in banning tobacco advertising being made for Formula One motor racing, and now British citizenship for a pair of charge-sheeted arms dealers, shouldn't the sum of £1,000,000 be now known as a "Tony".*

*MIKE ROBERTS,*

*Fareham, Hants.*

*PS: With new technology it now seems to be only a matter of months between a story being reported in Private Eye and it then reappearing in the newspapers (ie, Mandy and "cash for passports"). Will the further adoption of advanced communications reduce this to mere weeks I wonder?*

## Methodist in his madness

*Sir,*

***Piloti (Eye 1019) has evidently never taken the trouble to visit Bingley nor to speak with any former members of the congregation of Mornington Road Methodist Church who moved to join the congregation of Eldwick Methodists. Had he done so he would have seen that his pen portrait of the Rev David Johnson as some modern day Visigoth roaming the Northlands in search of churches to destroy was laughable. David Johnson is a thoroughly good man, who tried to do the best for his congregation by offering an alternative to a dwindling number of people having to spend all their time raising funds for the upkeep of a structure that they could never fully utilise. As for "having no time for historic buildings", the Rev Johnson was also minister at Eldwick Methodists, a church he was very sad to leave, where the original Chapel/Sunday School dates from 1832 and the main Church from 1888. Unlike Mornington Road the Eldwick Church was built by the congregation for the congregation and continues to have thriving, active congregation. Mornington Road was always too big for its potential congregation and probably says more about the afterlife aspirations of a Victorian mill-owner than it does about any form of Christianity.***

*CHRIS GREENWOOD,*

***Bingley, W. Yorkshire.***

*"Your school results are a disgrace – even for a boy"*

## Bleat around the Bush

*Sir,*

***Your excellent cover continues the current fashion to denigrate the new US president's intellectual prowess. In intellectual terms he may well be the equivalent of a 25 watt lightbulb but, as I recall, Ronald Reagan's measure registered even lower on the intellectual scale. He is, however, considered to have been one of the most successful US presidents. "Dubya" may therefore prove to be rather more successful than our Clinton-supporting Liberal elite would like. In any event he is unlikely to be as divisive or crooked as his predecessor or as politically correct and up-tight as Al Gore. As such he may prove a welcome change.***

*Yours faithfully,*
*ANDREW WAUCHOPE,*

*London SE11.*

## Waugh path

*Sir,*

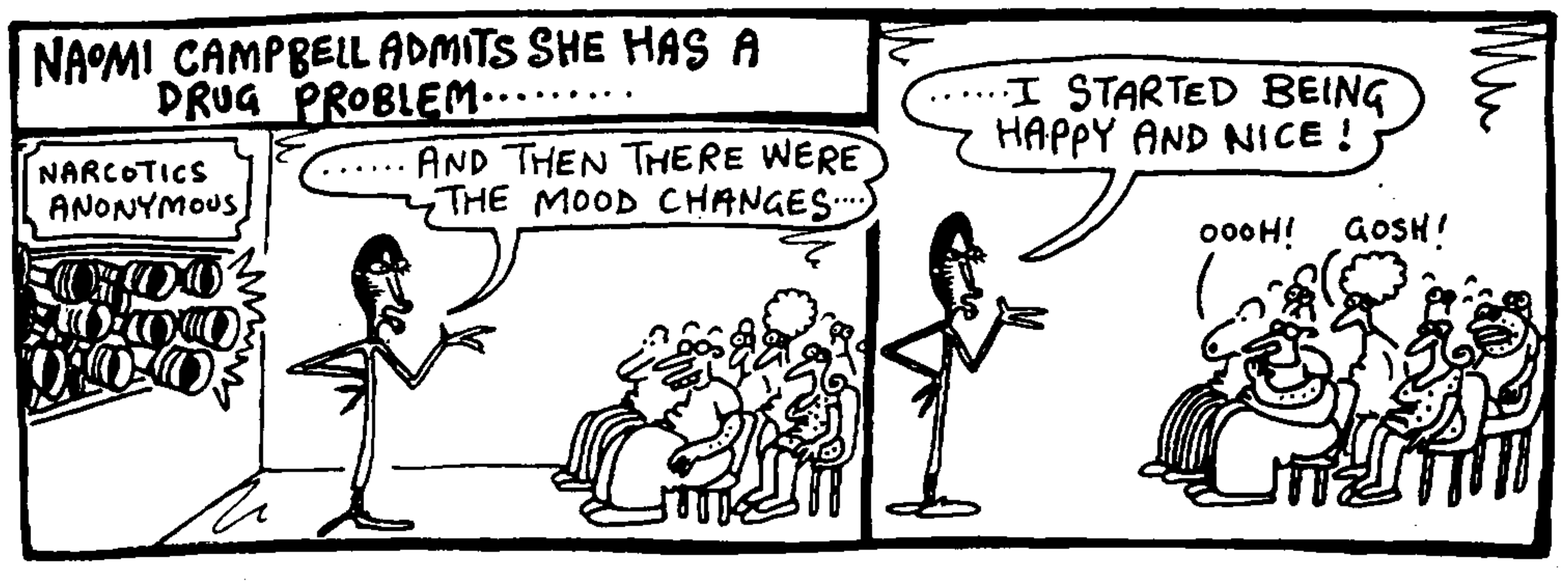
*Eye readers might like to know that the two collections of Auberon Waugh's Diaries are available in a single volume from the Akadine Press. Craig Brown, in the Oldie, thought the book "worth flying to America for"; stay-at-homes can get hold of copies at www.commonreaders.com*

*Yours,*
*THOMAS MEAGHER,*

*The Akadine Press, New York, USA.*

SUPERMODELS

KERBER


NAOMI CAMPBELL ADMITS SHE HAS A DRUG PROBLEM.....
NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS
.....AND THEN THERE WERE THE MOOD CHANGES....
.....I STARTED BEING HAPPY AND NICE!
OOOH! GOSH!

# I-SPY

**Submitted by Alan King, D. Fitzgerald, Nick Hutton.** £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

## Webbed feat

*Sir,*

*M.D. likes to take a pop at the GMC, and your last issue (Web Special) was no exception. Like him, I reckon the GMC has a lot to do before it fully serves both patients and profession. But it seems that the Eye's doctor and sometime lecturer in communications skills has problems using his mouse.*

*If he takes a proper look at the GMC web-site he will find much more than the Lloyd Roberts lecture by GMC president Sir Donald Irvine, and there's a heck of a lot of material there of use to patients and doctors alike. What the professional standards are, how to complain, information about recent cases, etc. Even Sir Donald's lecture is pretty interesting. The fact that the first GP president of the GMC, by no means one of medicine's clubbable grandees, fights so hard for a more open, accountable and patient-centric healthcare system in the UK is probably quite useful.*

*Yours faithfully,*
*ALEXANDER EVANS,*
*London NW6.*

## Dobson's choice

*Sir,*

*M.D. is quite wrong in describing Frank Dobson as "thick-but-unambitious". Frank is many things – dedicated, principled, efficient, sympathetic, jovial, approachable – "unambitious" if you like – but, above all, highly intelligent and possessed of unusual political skills.*

*It surprises me that no political commentator, not even your esteemed organ, seemed to realise that the real reason why Commissar (Oops, sorry! "Reverend") Blair wanted Frank to compete for the post of mayor of London was to get him out of a ministry where his qualities would make him a thorn in the flesh of "new" Labour on matters of health. In the end, it didn't matter – his constituents, such as myself, welcomed him back with open arms. I have, however, no quarrel with M.D.'s opinion of the present incumbent of the post of minister of health.*

*Yours sincerely,*
*MIRIAM MILLER,*
*Via e-mail.*

## Rs from her elbow

*Sir,*

*Re: Anne Robinson's pronunciation (Letters, Eye 1020). I read in the newspaper recently that Ms Robinson has been attending elocution lessons. In a recent edition of The Weakest Link, she asked the question: "How many Rs are there in 'three days'?" The contestant looked understandably confused when she answered "one" and was told that the correct answer was "seventy-two".*

*Perhaps Ms Robinson should consider demanding a refund for the lessons?*

*Regards,*
*ALLAN YOUNG,*
*Via e-mail.*

***"Solomon Grundy born on Sunday,***
***On the net on Monday,***
***Sold on Tuesday,***
***Re-sold on Wednesday,***
***In care on Thursday,***
***Court of Appeal on Friday,***
***In the Sun on Saturday,***
***Forgotten on Sunday"***

# Colemanballs

*£10 paid for contributions*

*"And Scott Gemill has put Everton ahead in the big match between the bottom five."*
**STEVE RYDER, BBC1**
(Andy Thompson)

*"If you're the chairman of a football club, and cocaine abuse is going on, you have to take a line on it."*
**GRAHAM SPIERS, Scottish TV**
(Andrew Maclennan)

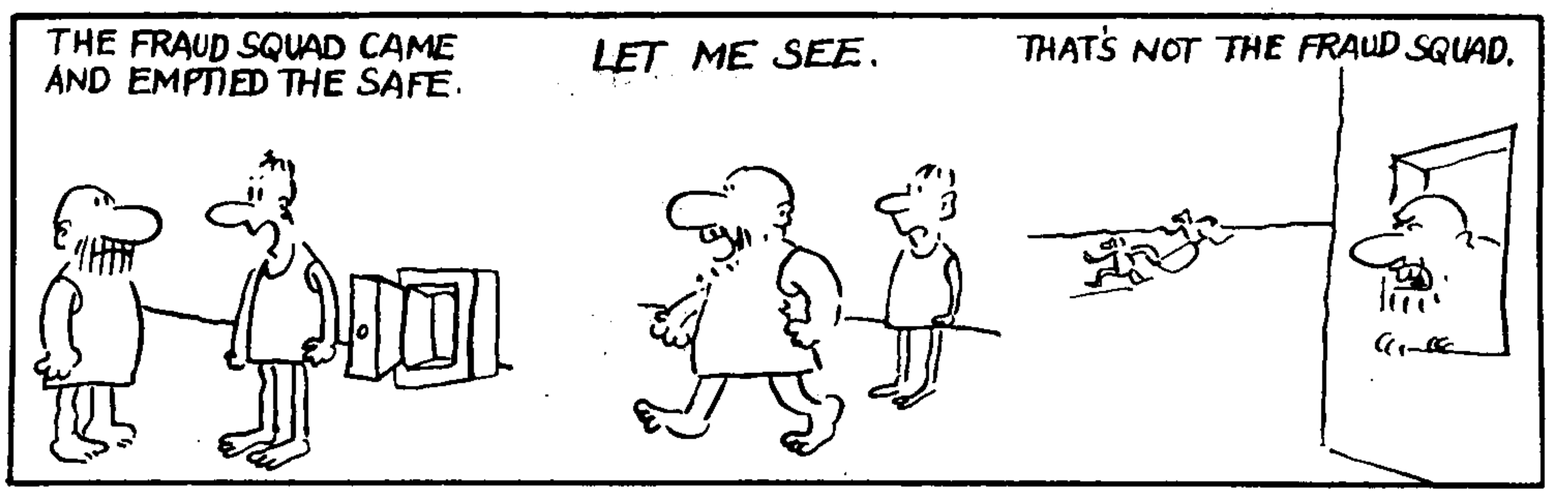
*"In this age of mobile phones, faxes and e-mails, we just don't communicate anymore..."*
**SUZY QUATTRO, Steve Wright Show**
(David A. Robinson)

*"...don't forget this club nearly went out of extinction last year."*
**ALLAN SMITH, TalkSport**
(Glyn Berrington)

*"Now the press will be following Mandelson like a tonne of bricks."*
**DEREK DRAPER, BBC News**
(Simon Quinn)

# HOM SAP

AUSTIN




# Letter from **Kinshasa**

## *from Our Own Correspondent*

**BEREAVEMENT is often a time of confusion. But imagine our surprise when we woke up to find that the overweight dictator we had been insulting and moaning about for the last three and a half years suddenly turned out to be something like Democratic Congo's own, albeit more bulky, version of your Princess of Hearts.**

There were genuine tears as Laurent Kabila's coffin was brought to Kinshasa, and not just from the six struggling army officers who had to unload the heavy box from the plane without dropping it.

All sorts of theories were flying around as to why one of Mzee (Wise Man) Kabila's bodyguards decided to shoot him – it was our Angolan friends, our Ugandan enemies, perhaps the Americans. Or was it just a soldier who could no longer bear to watch the president stuff four chickens for breakfast?

He might even have escaped. As one of his ministers put it, two of the three bullets to hit Kabila entered his prodigious stomach but "did no harm".

Particular suspicion of a conspiracy has been aroused by the fact that some people seem to have known about the shooting much earlier than the time at which it officially took place; the fact that the alleged assassin was himself killed only moments after opening fire; and possibly above all the distinctly un-Congolese precision with which the funeral was organised.

Everything was just right, you see, even down to the miles of specially-printed cloth bearing the late president's grinning face, that all our officials had in good time for the funeral.

All the old comrades were there: Bob Mugabe, our ever more dotty Zimbabwean ally; Angola's Jose Eduardo dos Santos; and a slightly confused looking Sam Nujoma from Namibia. They at least had the good sense to make sure their own soldiers had disarmed all the Congolese who might have been around to provide insecurity. Only the Congolese guard of honour was allowed to carry guns, but sensibly not bullets.

So with more tears we laid Kabila the First to rest. The unkind might suggest that the weeping and wailing were not so much for what we lost with the father as for what we are going to get now his 29-year-old son has taken his place. Just like his father before him and dear departed CIA pointman Mobutu Sese Seko before that, all our foreign friends are telling us that young Joseph is the man we need to save Congo from itself. Your British ambassador was among the first to go along with offers of help, possibly from one monarchy to another.

But we are more worried about our country, especially since Kabila the elder lost most of it to his former friends in Uganda and Rwanda, with whom he fell out after they had helped him seize power, and to his new friends in Zimbabwe and Angola, who helped him fight the old friends in exchange for the rest of the diamonds, gold, cobalt and so on.

The outside world seems to have got the idea that the portly elder Kabila was not just a big obstacle, but a big obstacle to peace, because he sometimes seemed a bit reluctant to go along with a plan to more or less give our enemies half the country on condition that they would leave eventually. When we had the Belgians to stay it only took them 70 years to go. At least while they were here Joseph Conrad got to write *Heart of Darkness* on our magnificent Congo river, providing decades more inspiration for your hacks when they got hard up for a thought or two.

Some of us might already be learning to love our new leader now we know he has picked up a few words of French, our official language, and that his officials tell us his mother was Mbangu-bangu rather than Rwandan, as people had always seemed to accept before. But those of us who knew the young man as head of the army are a little more worried than the foreign ambassadors would seem to be about the numerous reports from local human rights groups of torture, abduction and extortion by soldiers under his direct command while he was still just a humble major-general.

We're not suggesting anyone should shoot our new president; but we take a little comfort from the thought that whoever succeeds Joseph it will probably not be his son.

# FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH

● **"So far, I've tried not to comment on the episode, because I wanted to keep it out of the news,"** Christian Olsen told reporters in the Da Carlo bar in Bodø, in northern Norway. **"But yes, I can confirm that the incident did occur. Well, I can hardly deny it, because there were four hundred witnesses in the bar at the time."**

**Olsen, the bar manager at Da Carlo, was recalling the events which had taken place on the previous Saturday. "We have a young clientele here, mostly aged between twenty and thirty-five. We're the most popular night spot in Bodø, and a number of male guests are in the habit of playing harmless pranks. You know. Dropping their trousers and underpants at the bar when they order drinks, setting fire to their own flatus, attaching bicycle pumps to their penises and inflating their testicles, or making amusing shadows with their genitals. That's the sort of thing we all get up to here in Bodø.**

**"But last Saturday, two young mothers from out of town were here, and they decided to take things further. Without warning, they took off their sweaters, took their breasts in their hands, and began strolling around the bar, randomly squirting milk at people. Then some of our local mothers rose to the challenge, and before long there were ten or twelve women, all squirting breast milk around and dousing the guests, the bouncers, the bar staff, everyone. It was astonishing. Some of them could squirt their milk for several yards. It really stings if it hits you in the eye. As of yesterday, they've all been banned. We have to draw the line somewhere."** *(Nordlands Framtid, 5/1/01. Spotter: G.Q. Burns)*

—●—

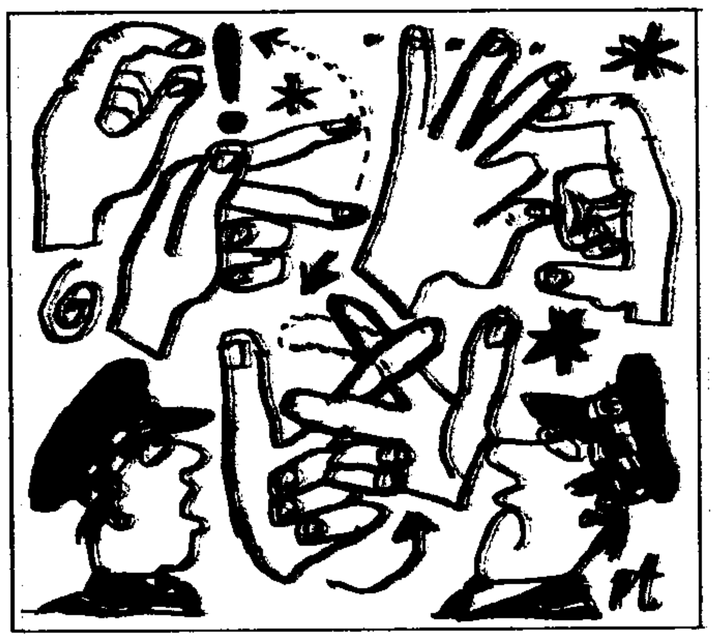
● *"I have my pride," Dr Chau Chak-lam explained to an inquest in Hong Kong, after the death of one of his patients, "and that is why my diagnosis was incomplete. I knew that my patient had acute angina pectoris, and was in a serious condition, but I did not know how to spell 'acute', so I left the word out of my referral letter to the hospital. Unfortunately, this meant that the hospital staff did not treat his condition as being serious, and made him wait for four hours. Sadly, he died before treatment could be administered."*

*Asked by the coroner why he had not written his referral letter in Chinese, Dr Chau replied: "It is common practice in Hong Kong to use English when writing referral letters. I did not want the hospital authorities to think I was uneducated, so I just did the best I could. I can spell 'angina pectoris' without difficulty, but I have always had trouble with the spelling of 'acute'. It's a short word, but it's a really tricky one."* (The Bangkok Post, 5/1/01. Spotter: Anon)

—●—

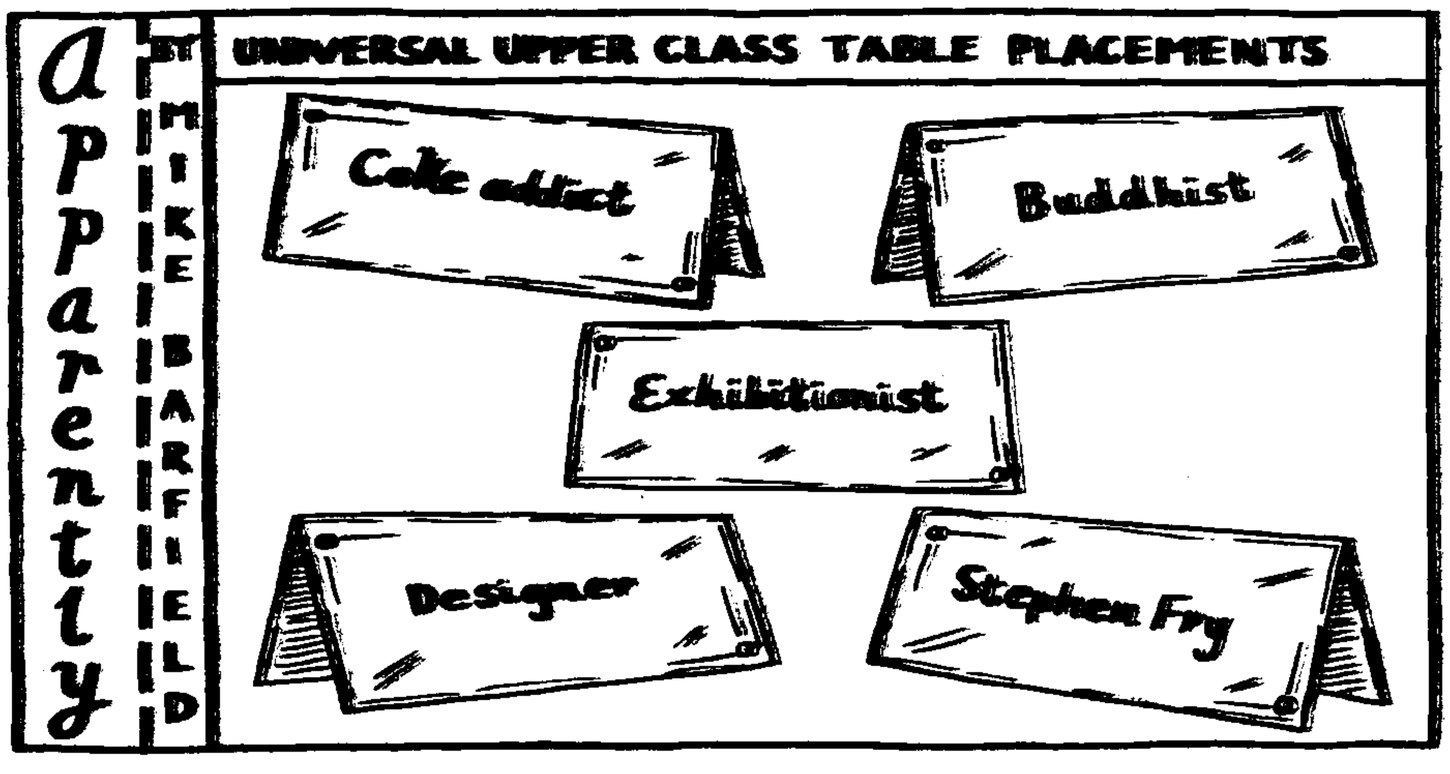
● "Abuse is abuse," prosecuting counsel David Macro told Blackburn magistrates, "and obscene language is obscene language. Just because Mr Gill is deaf and speech-impaired doesn't alter the fact that he aimed a torrent of abuse at police officers, albeit in sign language. That is against the law, and his conduct cannot be excused."

Speaking at the trial of Balraj Gill, a thirty-one-year-old deaf man living in a Blackburn hostel, Macro explained what had happened. "On the night in question, two police officers saw Mr Gill in the red light district of town. They knew that he was under a curfew order, as a condition of probation with regard to an earlier offence, so they apprehended him and walked him



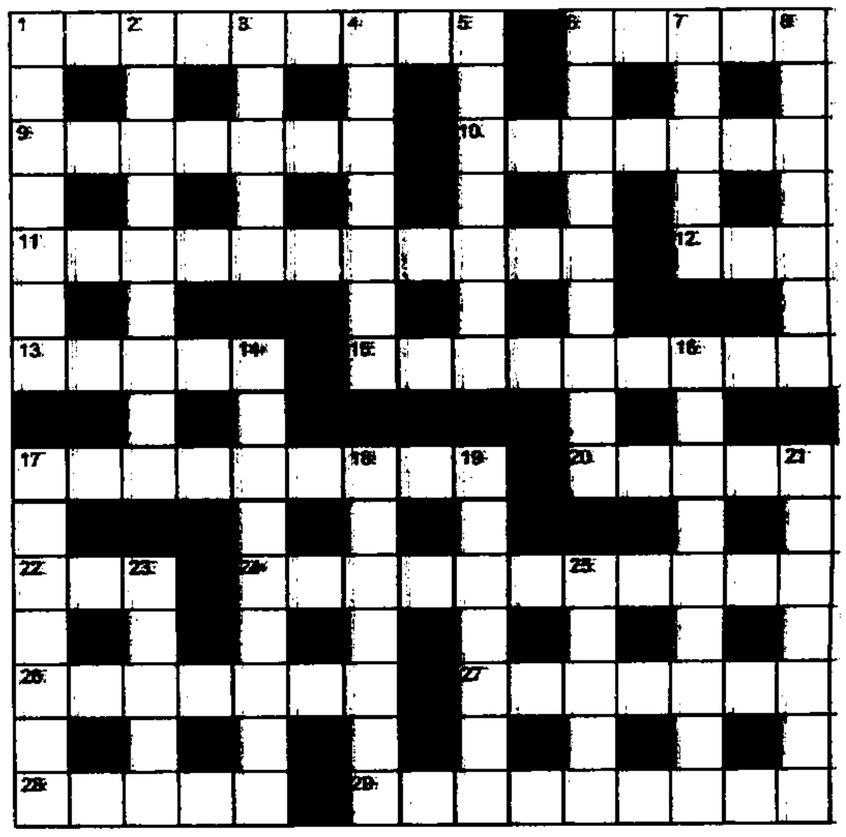
back to the hostel. All the way there, Mr Gill was signing at the officers, but none of them knew sign language, so they had no idea what he was saying. But when they reached the hostel, Mr Gill continued to sign at the officers, and staff translated what he was trying to communicate. It turned out that he was hurling a veritable Billingsgate of abuse and obscenity at both officers, so they arrested him."

Gill admitted a breach of the peace, and was bound over to keep the peace for six months. *(Lancashire Evening Telegraph, 2/9/00. Spotter: C. McNicol)*




# EYE CROSSWORD 176

by Cyclops — £100 prize



ACROSS

1 Two-dimensional Clinton suppressing a pathetic tear (9)
6 Real piss takers, this lot (5)
9 As egg-producers do, in anticipation of a lay? (7)
10 'Sly' involved in exploits – he put out my one and only (7)
11 Wee Scottish form of address: "Poser!" (5,6)
12 Rag doll's unsafe stuffing (3)
13 "Blair lacks character" – city bishop – "and that's a flattering description" (5)
15 Old Spice constituent once demolished one cart (9)
17 Live-in lover's loveless "coo-ee!" gets round convention (9)
20 Gives up pleasures (5)
22 Commercial Union-backed terrorists (3)
24 Unpolitic, so naff, bulk removal (11)
26 He can't see maiden getting arm besmirched with sticky stuff (2,5)
27 They shuffle around, marbles lost (7)
28 Dug around for material (5)
29 Brenda's supporters with change of political bias are still her supporters (9)

DOWN

1 Squander an opportunity to work for head (4,3)
2 Flashy kisser, one who goes in for ear-piercing (4-5)
3 *Today* rescheduled by OBN candidate (5)
4 High up Brenda, end of line monarch (7)
5 Make respectable amount of cash (7)
6 Conservative rubbished baldy Ken's town (9)
7 Some hanky-panky with pole, Grandma? (5)
8 It's almost pleasant being topped by rat poison (7)
14 Capless telescope good inside butt – it gets the cheeks working (6-3)
16 They get poor service entertaining Brenda (9)
17 Tour operator hit Cyclops on date (4,3)
18 Surface layer of lips too rubbery (7)
19 Transport drug (7)
21 They might get inflamed making evil applications (7)
23 One who promotes topless head case (5)
25 Compartment covering losing candidate's political clique (5)

£100 prize to first solution opened on 16.2.01. Entries to 'Crossword', Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN.

## Solution to Crossword No. 175

Winner: A. NEIL

ACROSS: 1 Sue 3 Sherman 7 Iby 9 Cavorting 10 Belch 11 Dispute 12 Tally-ho 13 Tongue-in-cheek 16 Sabre-rattling 21 Nightie 23 End user 25 Blair 26 Elocution 27 Eye 28 Buttock 29 Zit.

DOWN: 1 Secede 2 Elvis 3 Scrounger 4 Evil eye 5 Megaton 6 Nobel 7 Jelly bean 8 Yah boo 14 Orangeade 15 Half drunk 17 Re-elect 18 Tremolo 19 Unable 20 Brandt 22 Throb 24 Swizz.

# LORD BIRT'S PLAN FOR MANDELSON'S DEFENCE

by Our PR Staff **Jane Spynne**

**THE NEWS that Lord Birt is to mastermind Peter Mandelson's campaign to rehabilitate himself has sent shockwaves of laughter through the whole country, writes Jane Spynne.**

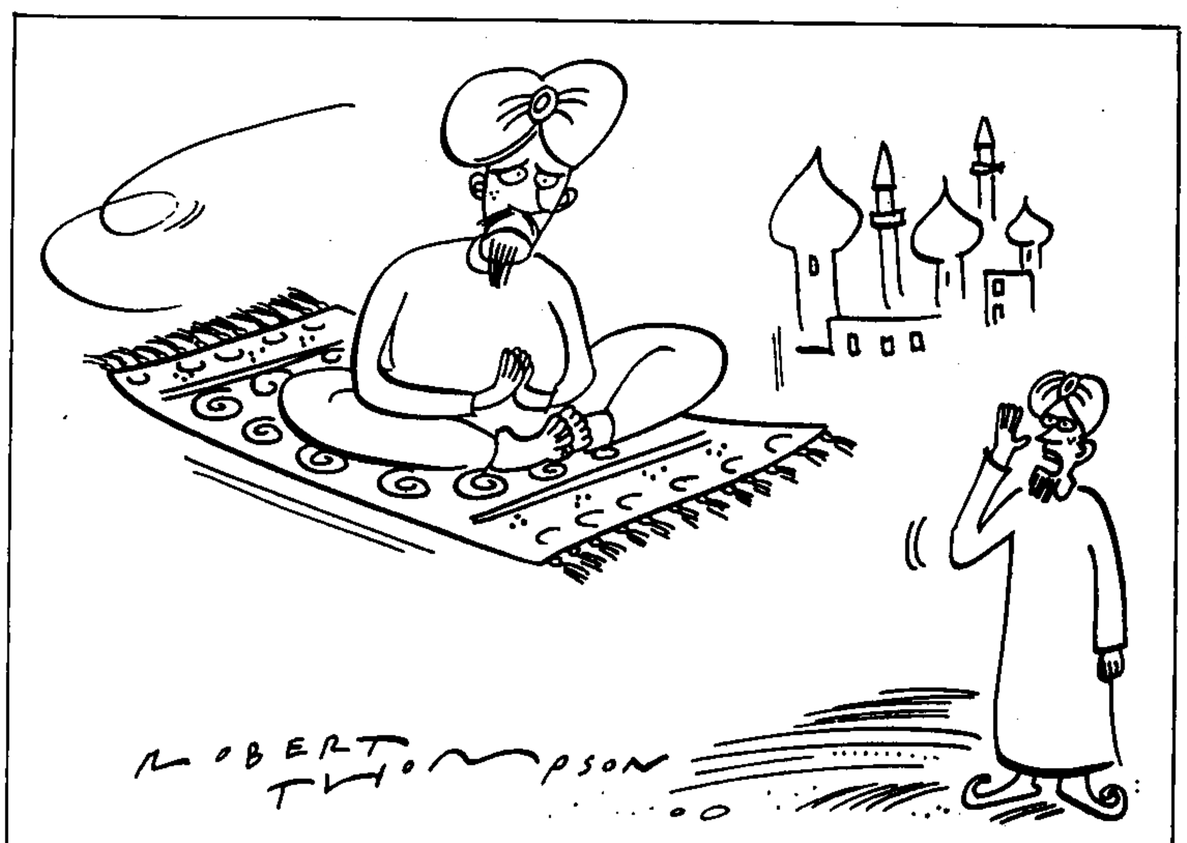
Lord Birt has immediately outlined his 400 point plan on behalf of his long-standing friend, which involves:

- **The hiring of 200 consultants to prepare an outline for the restructuring of the minister's career.**
- **The creation of a huge red balloon to float above Westminster symbolising Mandelson's ability to "rise above petty squabbles".**
- **The setting up of "Mandelson Resources" to hire out the former minister to "Mandelson Broadcast" answerable to "Mandelson Communications".**
- **The rescheduling of News About Peter Mandelson to 3am with a 24 hour rolling Mandelson Report on Digital.**

## LATE NEWS

### Mandelson Recruits Janet Street-Porter

IN YET another example of his brilliant news management skills and perceptive PR acumen, Mr Mandelson has called on the skills of the editor of the Independent on Sunday and "Yoof Guru" Ms Janet Street-Pooter, 72. In a statement on his behalf, Ms Street-Corner said: "Fahkin' hell – wot a liberty! Givin' Peter the fahkin' push?! Christ all-bleedin' mighty – that Tony Blair must need his fahkin' brains tested." *(Cont. p. 94.)*




*"Don't sit like that! You'll get deep-vein thrombosis"*

The Tripoli Times

Friday 9 February 2001

# HYSTERICAL SCENES GREET GUILTY VERDICT

**by Our Man in Westminster**

A HUGE crowd massed outside Downing Street to protest the innocence of Mohmed Ali Munnigrabbi Mandhi, the convicted former head of intelligence of the British Government.

Chanting Anti-Blair slogans, the mob, consisting of over two people (Sid and Doris Harris, the so-called Kintbury Two), demanded vengeance on the hated Ali Stir Kham Bell.

"How could Vaz be innocent and Mandhi be guilty? The evidence against Mandhi was pathetically flimsy," said Harris, setting fire to a flag bearing the New Labour Party logo.

"The findings of this kangaroo court cry out to heaven for God to strike down the infidel Blair and his huge prophet from the Hindujas" *(Surely some mistake? Ed.).*

**ON OTHER PAGES**

★ *Should men fight in the front line? asks Libya Purvis* **2**
★ *Your Camel Trains Tonight* **3**
★ *Unfunny Cartoon by Mahood* **94**

# New Logo For New Labour

**by Our Logo Staff CHRISTOPHER LOGO**

THE Labour Party today unveiled its new corporate logo. A spokesman said, "We considered a number of options, including the M of McDonald's, the BP Sunflower, the BBC Red Balloon and the Conservative Party Torch.

But in the end we felt this symbol said everything about what New Labour believes in." It accompanies the new party song *Stand By Your Mandy.*

# HEATH'S PRIVATE VIEW

# ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

*Incumbent: Rev. A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)*

*Hullo,*

And a very sad "hullo" it is too, because of the tragic departure from the PCC of one of my dearest and best-loved friends, Mr Mandelson.

There is no need to go into the reasons for Peter's decision to submit his resignation when I asked for it.

As he is the first not to admit, he made a terrible mistake over the signing of Mr Hinduja's passport application form, having previously accepted Mr Hinduja's very generous donation of £1 million to our Millennium Tent fund.

But let none of us be too hard on Peter. He has been under terrible stress for some months now, and his mind may not always have been fully focussed on his parish duties, such as the running of our Mission to St Gerry's in Northern Ireland.

As Mr Campbell so charitably put it, "Poor Peter has become a little bit, how can I say, bonkers".

And that is why it is best for Peter to get right away from parish business, and perhaps the parish as well, and try to carve out some sort of meaningful new life for himself, a long way away. Perhaps Brazil would be a suitable place for him and his devoted partner Renaldo, where the tempo of life is more relaxed (and house prices are rather lower!)

I know some people in the parish have been asking, "How on earth will the Vicar manage without his former Churchwarden Peter beside him, to tell him what to do and what to say?"

Well, let me tell you, this is a little bit offensive to your Vicar, as you can well imagine! The implication is that I haven't got a mind of my own!

Well, I am sure Mr Campbell would have something pretty scathing to say about that, probably throwing a few salty words of the kind we try not to use at Evensong! *(Alastair, please don't cut this bit out!)*

So, let's forgive and forget about this one, shall we (and I mean particularly "forget"!). It's time to move on, and draw "a line in the sand under this one" as my predecessor the Revd. Mr Major was so fond of saying every time a member of his PCC was found in the organ lift with one of the ladies from the flower roster!

But, may I say, before I leave this subject, how personally saddened I was by the response of some members of the PCC when I had to tell them the terrible news that Peter was leaving us.

Instead of looking suitably despondent, there was general merriment, including laughter, singing and, I understand, a

reconvening of the meeting in the Britannia Arms that evening, when the entire stock of champagne in the pub cellar was drunk, to the chanting of "*'ere 'e goes, 'ere 'e goes, 'ere 'e goes*".

I sincerely hope that all those involved in these disgraceful scenes are now feeling suitably ashamed of themselves! I will not embarrass any of them by naming names, but the following may be only too aware who I have in mind: Mr Straw, Mr Brown, Mr Prescott, Mr Blunkett, Mr Byers, Miss Short, and indeed everyone else in the parish.

Yours regretfully,

Tony

## Kids' Korner

### The Gospel for the Young

*(as told by the Vicar!)*

**THE STORY OF PETER THE FISHYMAN**

Our Lord's favourite disciple was called Peter. Our Lord was very fond of him because he had helped him in his mission to spread the Good News. But, unfortunately, Peter (which is the Latin for "rocky") turned out to have serious psychological flaws. And when the testing time came, he let the Vicar down very badly. We call this the story of "Peter's Betrayal". As it says in the Good Book, "You are called Peter, for you are the rock on which my project might well founder."

Letter of Peter to the Sunday Times, 7.3
*(New Labour Bible)*

## Welcome...

**...to Mr Reid, who has taken over the Mission to St Gerry's at short notice. And of course we also welcome his partner, Renalda, who is a well-known film-producer and director of that classic video Brazilian Dentist On The Job (available from Dirty Des, the vids 'n' mags shop run by Mr Desmond). I am sure parishioners will have seen this one in the privacy of their own houses! T.B.**

## Parish Postbag...

*Dear Sir,*

*I was utterly disgusted and shocked by your appalling treatment of my good friend, Peter. You have behaved in a totally despicable, contemptible and utterly*

*Yours sincerely,*
*Robert Harris,*
*The Bunker, Berchtes Gardens.*

**The Editor reserves the right to cut all creepy, snivelling letters clearly dictated by Mr Mandelson to his only friend left in the world for reasons of space.**

*Dear Sir,*

*We represent Mr Peter Mandelson, whom we understand previously occupied the post of Churchwarden and Missioner to the Parish of St Albion's. We are instructed by our client to inform all parish newsletters that any allegations of lying, duplicity, mendaciousness or any other form of contumelious conduct whatsoever, will be met with the strongest possible response. We shall not hesitate to institute proceedings and to seek full legal redress.*

*Yours etc,*
*Gold-diggers & Co,*
*Solicitors and Commissioners of Shirts, Jermyn Street, London.*

**Thought for the Week**

"Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his friend for his own life."

**(Proverbs 7. 4)**

## Tidings From The Creche

We've had a terrific response to our Under 5s drawing competition to come up with a picture of the Vicar to go on his new letterhead. The drawing we all liked best was this one by Charlotte Millbank (aged 3½).

Says Charlotte: "It shows a big heart because the Vicar is all heart and a pair of legs because the Vicar has got plenty of legs and will go on being a successful vicar for years to come. Hooray for Tony."

And thanks to Alastair for taking down Charlotte's words so faithfully.

# EARTHQUAKE LATEST

## MIRACLE RESCUE OF 194-YEAR-OLD MAN

by Our Foreign Staff **Rick Terscale**

**A 194-year-old man was today lifted from the rubble of the earthquake.**

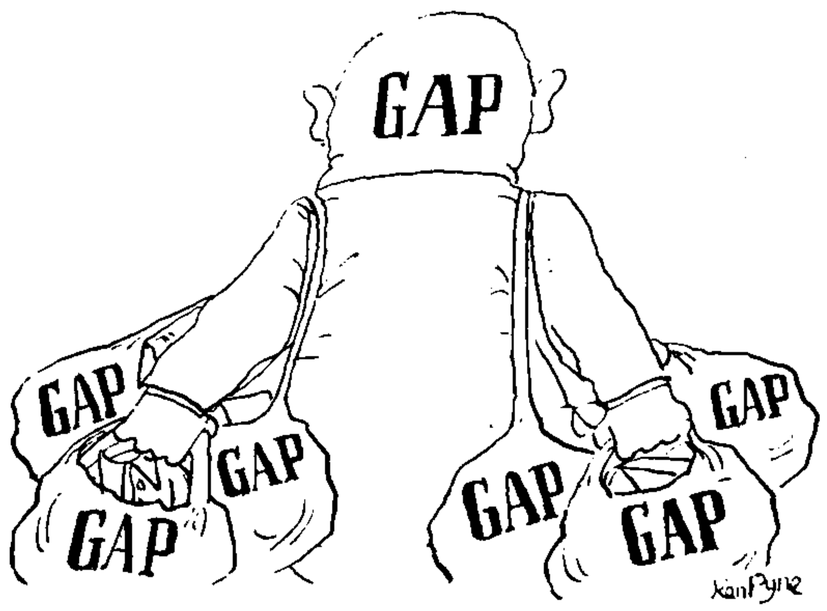
He was named as Daily Telegraph reporter William "Bill" Deedes. Mr Deedes was visiting Gujarat from Britain for a short drink in the bar. *(Surely "piece in the Daily Telegraph"? Ed.).*

### Words Not Deedes

Rescuers said, "It is a miracle that he survived being sent to cover an earthquake at his age. No wonder he had a stroke.

"Deedes was buried in a pile of rubbish and no one had noticed him for weeks. Now he has been rescued and put on the front page."

*Doctor Lefanu writes: Bill Deedes is reported as having suffered a slight stroke and this can affect speech. Whereas before Deedes would say "Shurely shome mishtake?", he will now in all likelihood say "Surely some mistake?"*



## THE SALLY JOCKSTRAP INTERVIEW

### Sven Goran-Eriksson

I TRAVELLED to Aintree, the Mecca of Britain's golfers, to meet the man who is going to put English cricket back on the map.

**Sally:** Sven, a good result for your team on Saturday against the Welsh. How do you rate your chances of winning back the Davis Cup?

**Sven:** I think drinking alcohol always affects a player's ability to kick the ball in a negative fashion.

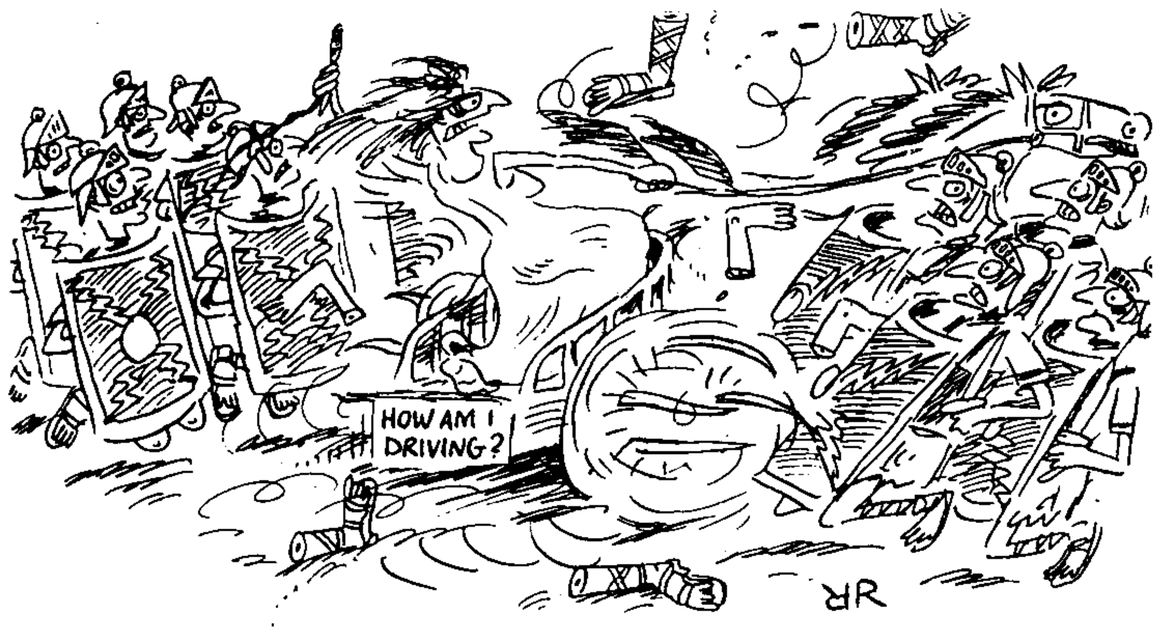
**Sally:** Yes, but we're here to talk about boxing, Sven. Surely it's time for Michael Schumacher to hang up his boots?

**Sven:** It is time to bring in young players who show potential talent for kicking the ball in an intelligent fashion.

**Sally:** Does that mean you're going to leave out Frankie Dettori?

**Sven:** English house prices are very expensive for sure. Such a lot of money for tiny house – not even room to swing a mouse! You must be crazy, no?

© *All newspapers.*




# GLENDA SLAGG

### *Fleet Street's Gal In The Front Line!!?!*

**Women in the front line!?!?! Don't make me laugh!!! OK, so us gals can do anything men can do – and do it better!?!?! But why should we join in and do their dirty work for them??! If they want to kill each other and blow each other's brains out, that's fine – but don't ask me to come a-lootin' and a-shootin'!?!? OK????? Atten-shun!!!**

Have you heard the latest?!?! The bumbling brass hats in the War Office are trying to stop us gals joining in World War Three!! We've got as much right to be there as anyone else?!!? What are you scared of, Mr Commander-in-Chief?!?!? Do you think we might run off with the Sergeant at the first opportunity?!?! You must be B-Army!!?! Geddit?!?! At Ease!!?!

*Those Mitford Girls – arenchasickofthem? Debbo, Nancy and the other one!?!? Everywhere you look there they are on the telly, in the papers, in my column?!?!? A load of posh girls sitting around a-robbin' and a-snobbin' with all the celebs of years gone by !?! So they met Adolf Hitler??! Who didn't!!?! Give us a break, Auntie Beeb, or we'll give them a Missford!?!? Geddit??!?!!*

**Hoorah for the Mitford Girls!?! Those dare-devil debs of yesteryear who paved the way for the liberated lasses of today!?!? I call them the "It-ford Girls" (Geddit?!?!) Period hats off to Binty, Bunty, Chico, Harpo and Adolf!?!?! And cheers too to the good old Auntie Beeb for giving us another giant dollop of these funky flappers of a bygone age!!?!**

*Here they are – Glenda's Valentine Cards (Geddit?!?!!)*

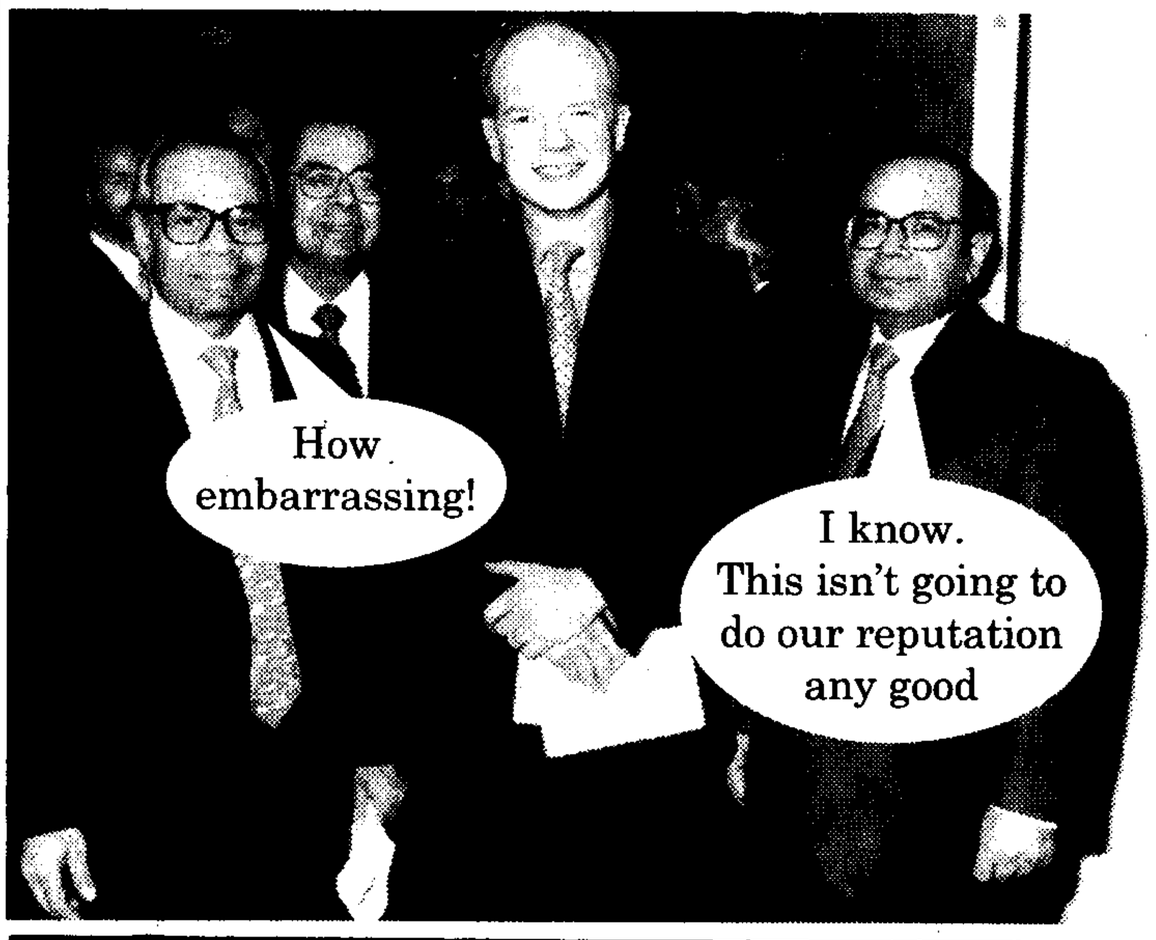
**Francis Maude MP** – He wants a gay Prime Minister!! Each to his own, Maudie – I prefer them straight!?!?!

**Keith Vaz** – OK, so he's fat, Indian and bent – that's the way I like them!!?!

**Robert Harris** – I could do with a spicy thriller to take to bed at night – though why he likes Mandy is a bit of an Enigma!?!! (Geddit??!?!)

***Byeeeeeee!!!!!!!!***

# EMBARRASSING PHOTO SHOCK




**Three longstanding magistrates no longer sitting**

*Lymington Times*

**Friday 2nd February 8.30 p.m.**
stand up comedy (seated)
**JEFF INNOCENT / RUSSELL BRAND**

*Norwich Arts Centre leaflet*

EXCLUSIVE TO PRIVATE EYE

# HOW DARE I RESIGN?

## by Peter Mandelson

**THERE has been a terrible miscarriage of justice, and I can keep silent no longer.**

**My loyalty to Tony Blair is second to none. But in this case I have to speak out.**

He should never have accepted my resignation when I offered it to him.

He should have known that I was demoralised after days of remorseless hounding by the media, baying for blood.

Tony should never have summoned me to Downing Street, to face a kangaroo court made up of himself and his friend Mr Campbell.

I was not allowed to plead my case, nor even to have my solicitor present. What justice is there in that, I ask?

I was grilled relentlessly for five minutes, and asked all sorts of impossible questions designed to catch me out, like "Did you make that call to Mike O'Brien, Peter, or not?"

Honestly, how can anyone be expected to remember whether they made a particular telephone call two years ago?

The two of them were just like the Gestapo. They fired question after question at me, as though I was some sort of criminal.

"Look, Peter, Jack says you made the call. So does Mike. Can you remember whether you did or not?"

No wonder that after a few minutes of this I was totally dazed and confused.

I couldn't believe it! After all,

these were meant to be my friends!

Yet here they were, beating a confession out of me like something out of Stalin's Russia!

"Ok," I said finally, "I give in. I confess. I did it! I'll resign, whatever you want. Only just stop asking me about the 'phone call."

Then Alastair handed me a sheet of paper. "Here is your confession," he said. "Go out and read it to the waiting journalists."

Like a fool, I agreed. I went out and did exactly as he said, as if I was a sleepwalker.

That is what brain-washing is all about.

And then, as if that was not enough, the next morning I was forced to read all these terrible headlines in the newspapers, making out that I was mad and had been sacked after having a nervous breakdown.

So much for loyalty, Alastair! So much for friendship, Tony!

If anyone is mad, it is you two. Particularly Alastair. I always warned you, Tony, not to trust him. And I was right. I knew that sooner or later he would let you down. But you wouldn't listen.

And I can tell you this. You will live to regret it. I am not a vindictive man. All I want is to clear my name.

I have no desire to betray all the government's secrets just before an election. And, of course, I would never dream of selling my memoirs to Mr Murdoch for £1 million, even though he has offered me this sum.

I know only too well what terrible damage this could inflict on the Project, if certain things were to come out about certain people in the last few weeks of what could be a very close election, now that your popularity has collapsed in the wake of my unforgiveable resignation.

All I want is for the record to be put straight over the supposed telephone call to Mr O'Brien. The essential facts are:

**1. It was all a long time ago.**

**2. I cannot remember whether I remember the call or not.**

**3. I certainly cannot be expected to answer any questions now that the whole affair is the subject of a comprehensive enquiry by Sir Wally Whitewash QC.**

**4. My resignation is thus rescinded and I should be given back my job as Foreign Secretary and Deputy-Prime Minister immediately.**

It is still possible, I hope, for all this to be sorted out in a civilised and grown-up way.

Rt. Hon. P. Mandelson
P.C. M.P.

PS. I hate you all.

# J'ACCUSE

## by Top Author Emile Zola Harris

**THIS government is responsible for the most disgusting act of treachery and conspiracy in the sordid annals of world politics. My friend, Captain Gayfuss, has become the innocent victim of a sinister plot without parallel in human** ***(cont. p. 94)***

## COMMENT

The Daily Pot says

## British Kettle Corporation Guilty of Disgraceful Political bias

NEVER in the history of the media have we witnessed such a shocking display of outright, self-interested political propaganda as the BKC's coverage of the Mandelson Affair.

The BKC's reputation has been tarnished for ever by its absurdly sympathetic treatment of Mandelson. It is a black day for them when they fail to live up to the noble traditions of the British media and failed to display even-handed, balanced treatment of this sleazy, left-wing poof and his corrupt bum-chum the Prime Minister. Vote Conservative!

*On other pages: Lynda Lee Pot says, "Princess Kettle is a stupid old bag".*

© The Daily Mail

YOBS
HUSBAND
can we move? This man is drunk and he's going to vomit
of course darling. How about over here?
not far enough, I'm afraid... Eeeeuuuee!

# Man Survives Wreckage

SEARCHERS were amazed when a man, identified as Mr K. Vaz, was discovered still clinging to his job days after the Indian passport scandal engulfed his Government.

"Vaz had been buried under the scandal for three whole days," said an amazed party worker, "but then we heard his feeble cry 'wait for the results of the inquiry... wait for the results of the inquiry,' and we knew he'd be alright."

Mr Vaz is 43 (days away from resigning). *(Reuters)*

Delhi Telegraph

Friday, February 9, 2001

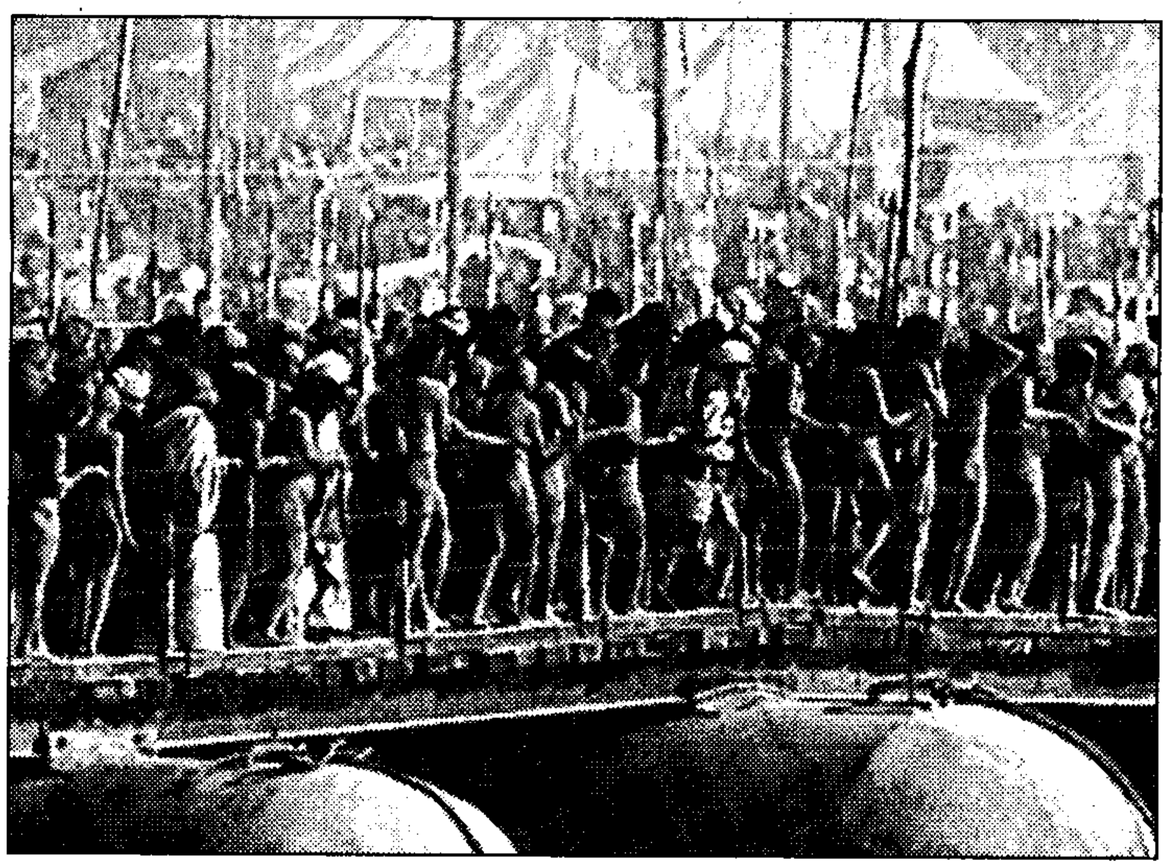
# MILLIONS OF BELIEVERS GATHER FOR WORLD'S BIGGEST EVER HINDUJA FESTIVAL

by Our Man In The River Thames ANDREW MARRHARAJAH

**IT HAS been billed as the biggest gathering of devotees of the goddess Muni the world has ever seen.**

From all over Britain they have come, to purify themselves by washing away their debts in the holy river of Muni.

Devout followers of Hinduja believe that they can achieve the mystical state of *veryishi* by making contact with the three Hinduja deities, Gotalot, Kashna and Bakhanda.



## ALMS DEALERS

I spoke to a typical group of Hinduja-ists, all of whom happened to be members of the British parliament.

"The coming of Hinduja into our lives has been the most wonderful blessing," said one elderly grocer who had travelled all the way from Salisbury to bathe in the holy money.

"I have long believed in the healing properties of Hinduja-ism," said the grocer with a smile, "and now I am laughing all the way to the banks of the Ganges."

## VAZ WASHES WHITER

But it is not only to the old that Hinduja-ism appeals. A new generation of believers have joined the pilgrimage, led by their guru Keith Vaz.

"As easily the most important Asian person in Britain today," he said, "I give my unequivocal support to this festival."

## KUM MOOLAH

With such huge numbers of people queuing up to share in "the blessings of Hinduja", it is not surprising that there are occasional casualties.

All Britain has been shocked by the story of one young mystic, Gahatma Mandi, who was paying homage to the Hindujas when he slipped, and was swept away by the muddy waters, never to be heard of again.

Said his friend Robert Hari Krishna, "It is a terrible tragedy. He did not jump, he was pushed."

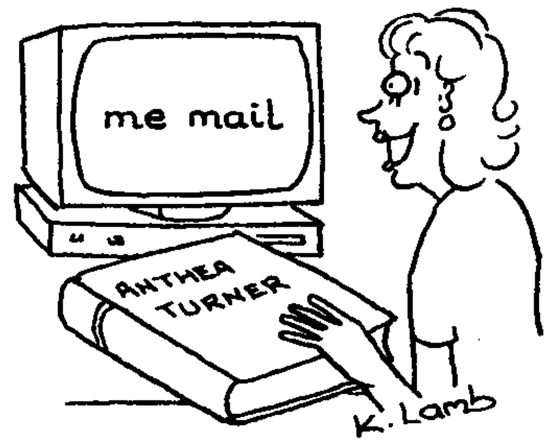
Another young worshipper, William Hague, on the banks of the Natwest *(cont)*

*"Can I have a number that makes me look hard and not gay"*

## ■ Film Choice

### Peter's Friendless

CLASSIC English comedy where a group of old friends gather together in a large house in Downing Street and put the boot into Peter Mandelson. Heavily indebted to the *Big Chill* but still entertaining. Don't miss the climax where Peter reveals that he is gay and dying to get his own back. Starring Kenneth Branagh as Alastair Campbell, Tony Slattery as Peter Mandelson and Hugh Laurie as Tony Blair.




# PEACE PROCESS FALTERS — ADAMS FLIES IN

by Our Northern Ireland Staff **Martin McGunless**

**FEARS were growing in Westminster last night that the fragile peace in the Labour Party would be destroyed with the departure of the Northern Ireland Secretary, Peter Mandelson.**

Talks between Mandelson and government spokesman Alastair Campbell have broken down and there is no communication whatsoever between the two camps.

Mr Mandelson is refusing to decomission his lawyers and Mr Campbell has broken the ceasefire by firing off a couple of cheap shots about Peter being "semi-deranged".

## Londonderry Irvine

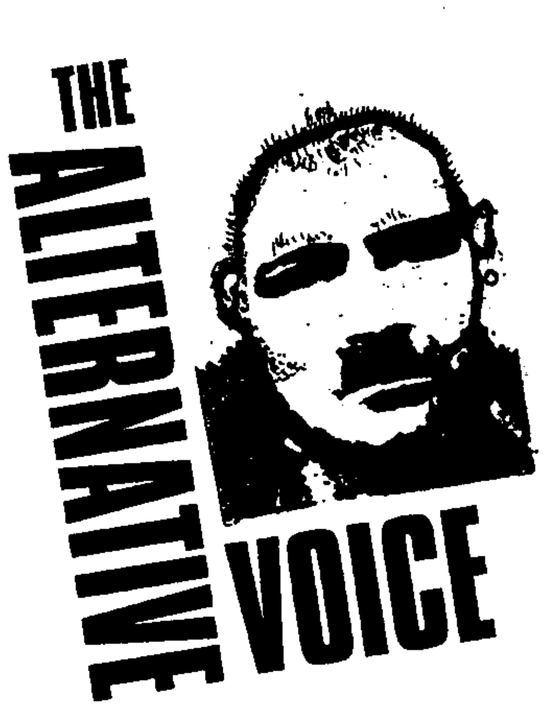
Peacemaker Gerry Adams has now flown in to London in an attempt to stop the fighting escalating into a full-blown civil war.

"I am here to help," he laughed. "The two sides have got to sit down at the table and negotiate a lasting peace. Ha ha ha ha ha ha."

Friends of Mr Mandelson said nothing because there aren't any.

## The George Bush Centre for Intelligence

*CIA website*




**Cedric Spart**, Co-Chair of the Camden Gay "Save The Trafalgar Square Pigeons" Alliance

**Once again, the hetero-sexist homophobic media have ruthlessly hounded out of office the only gay member of the Cabinet (apart from the others) under the cynical cover of pretending that his sacking was something to do with a trivial passport matter, whereas the real truth was that Mandelson's offence was his sexual orientation, ie that he was openly gay, which he insisted that no one should mention because it is a private matter which is no business of the media or of people like myself... er... it is a disgusting indictment of the whole homophobic hypocrisy of our society that millions of innocent pigeons can be ruthlessly murdered by Ken Livingstone, when it is clear that their next target will be London's gay community following the execution of Peter Mandelson for the so-called crime of simply making a telephone call... er...**
***(cont. p. 94)***

# NEWS IN BRIEF

## Victoria's 100th Anniversary Commemorated

ALL of Britain's tabloids this week commemorated the anniversary of the 100th front page story featuring Victoria Beckham.

"It's incredible to think there was a time when Victoria and her consort David didn't totally dominate the minds of our editors," said one delighted hack.

"Truly the Sun will never set on Victoria's empire," he added, "and neither will the Mirror, the Star, the Express or the Mail."

*(Reuters)*

## 'Soft Touch' Claim

THERE were claims today that the Daily Mail was a soft touch for asylum seekers' stories.

"More asylum seeker articles have ended up there than at any other newspaper," said one gypsy. "A lot of these articles should have been rejected out of hand and sent packing, but lax editorial controls have allowed them to slip through the net.

"The question has to be asked, why? It's almost as if they're being encouraged to turn up here."

"It's true that over the past year there's been a ten-fold increase in badly researched articles and woefully written comment pieces," said concerned Daily Mail readers. "Frankly, we've been overwhelmed by them, and still they keep coming."

*(Reuters)*

*"We're hoping to persuade more men to visit the surgery"*

# BLAIR ANNOUNCES INQUIRY INTO EVERYTHING

by Our Political Staff **Michael Whitewash** and **Simon Hogwash**

**THE Prime Minister yesterday silenced his critics by setting up an official inquiry into "absolutely everything".**

The inquiry will be headed by one of the country's leading lawyers, a man of whom nobody had heard until today.

Friends describe him as "intensely able, a real high-flyer, with a First Class rail ticket and striped trousers".

### SHOCK

The terms of the inquiry are to include:

- **the breakdown of Britain's transport system**
- **the collapse of the National Health Service**
- **the crisis in Britain's schools**
- **the explosion in the prison population**
- **asylum seekers**
- **the spread of HIV**
- **the need to cull badgers, pigeons, foxes, etc**
- **global warming**
- **the Hinduja brothers' passport application**
- **the argument between Miss Zara Phillips and her boyfriend outside a pub.**

The fact that all these matters are to be subject to the judicial inquiry means that no one is allowed to comment on any of them until the inquiry has delivered its verdict just after the election.

When the Conservatives complained that this would have the effect of silencing all political debate for the foreseeable future, Mr Blair announced that this would be the subject of a further inquiry, to report in the year 2020, and that therefore he could not possibly comment.

## ME AND MY SPOON

THIS WEEK

### ANITA BROOKNER

**You might not strike everyone as a spoon person. Is that fair?**

Certainly not! I've got quite a thing about spoons, if the truth be told.

**What is it that most appeals to you about them?**

There's something infinitely reassuring about a well-made spoon.

**Is it just the shape, or is it more than that?**

I don't think one can be too analytical about it.

**How would you say spoons had changed in your lifetime?**

Oh, very dramatically. I'm old enough to remember when polishing a spoon was an important part of daily life.

**Do spoons feature in your new novel?**

Indeed they do. One of my characters, who lives on her own, often uses spoons when she has an egg for breakfast.

**Do you think spoons can play an important part in relationships?**

Oh, yes, particularly if you live on your own, a spoon can loom large.

**Has anything amusing ever happened to you in connection with a spoon?**

No.

*NEXT WEEK: Vanessa Feltz.*

YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS BY BIRCH

Spring in Montmartre! Those cobbled streets trodden by Picasso, Braque and Modigliani when they were producing world-shattering art, without a sou to their names!
PARIS
What a depressing thought!
I agree - let's go to Mauritius again this Easter.

## TV Highlights

**Rebel Viewers**
BBC1 Sunday

STIRRING story of a popular revolt against the hated British Broadcasting Corporation who were occupying the Sunday evening schedules with dreary historical Irish drama.

Will the people put up with it? Or will they rise up en masse from their armchairs and turn over to watch "It'll be Alright on the Night 7" with Dennis Norden?

# IN THE SCOTTISH COURTS (Amsterdam)

## R. v. The Two Libyan Bombers: Day 9094

**Before Mr Justice McCocklecarrot, Mr Justice McMuffin and Lord Advocate of the Sporran.**

*[Judges' summing up: continued from page 1]*

even supposing that that could have been the case, and we are by no means convinced that it was. But this brings us to the crucial evidence of Mr Bugatti, the proprietor of Bugatti's Sportswear Emporium in Mintoff Road, Sliema, who, when shown a rather poor photograph of one of the accused, Mr Abdul Shifti Al-Shutfi, agreed that it could well have been the gentleman who entered his shop on the afternoon of Sept. 23 or possibly the morning of December 6. The gentleman claimed to have come in to shelter from the rain. And it certainly appears to be the case that light rain did indeed fall in the island of Malta on more than one occasion during the year in question. We find it particularly convincing that Mr Bugatti recalls that his brother was watching a football match on television between Gozo Wanderers and Real Valetta. Again records confirm that these two clubs did indeed meet on most Saturdays in 1988. From this evidence, we think it is highly likely that the bomb was wrapped up in a tracksuit purchased from Mr Bugatti's shop, placed in a brown Samsonite suitcase at Malta airport, or possibly Frankfurt, or it may have been some other place where they have aeroplanes, from where it was introduced into the luggage hold of the ill-fated airliner PanAm 103. We therefore have no hesitation in finding Mr Al-Shufti guilty of something a bit dodgy. But his accomplice Mr Shufti Al-Shifti is clearly innocent of all charges, since Mr Bugatti had no memory of him at all. We therefore sentence one or other of these two foreign chaps to be held in custody until he is released on appeal.

**ON OTHER PAGES**

**The Unanswered Questions**

Did They Do It? **6-7**

Aren't Scottish Judges Wonderful? says Magnus Linklaterson **10**

Lockerbie: The Tragedy That Must Never Happen Again, by Phil Space **20**

Unfunny Gadaffi cartoon by Peter Brookes **24**

# The Art of Spying

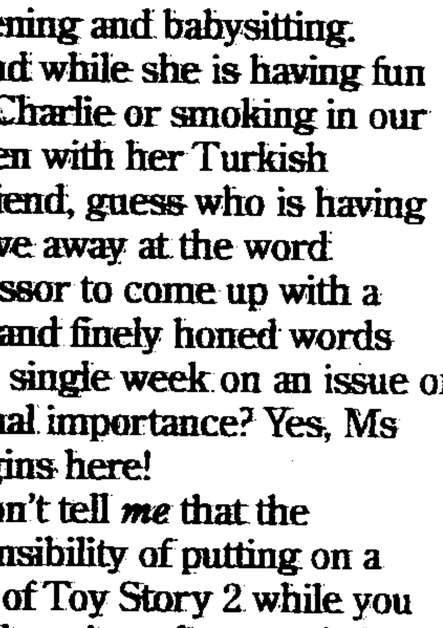
## Richard Tomlinson Reveals The Tools Of The Trade

**1. The Pen. It looks like a pen, writes like a pen and is a pen. Handy for dashing off those memoirs.**

**2. The Mouse. Spies are known to use the mouse for clicking onto the computer and setting up a website.**

**3. The Telephone. Essential for contacting agents. Literary agents.**

**4. The Secret Bank Account. All good spies have a special account set up in a neutral country ready to bank the large publisher's advance at a minute's notice.**



**5. The Stupid Hat. Very good for photo opportunities to publicise your rotten book in the Sunday Times. *(That's enough spy craft. Ed.)***

# POLLY FILLER

IS it me, or is the world going mad? I read in the paper that some working women are prepared to pay £22,000 a year for a nanny! £22,000? FOR A NANNY? Somebody tell me I'm dreaming, for goodness sake!

It's a pretty sad reflection on our society that some silly young girl who can barely put a fishfinger in the microwave is demanding £22,000 (Yes, 22k!) when a top columnist on a national newspaper only gets a measly £110,000 per annum.

How have we got our priorities so wrong? Surely these greedy girls don't deserve £22,000 for looking after our offspring while we sweat it out at the economic coalface?

All Illyana has to do in return for her £35 a week PLUS board, lodging, phone bills (8p per text message to her illiterate Chechnyan friends!) and unlimited use of toilet paper is look after Charlie all day and do the odd bit of washing, cooking, gardening and babysitting.

And while she is having fun with Charlie or smoking in our kitchen with her Turkish boyfriend, guess who is having to slave away at the word processor to come up with a thousand finely honed words every single week on an issue of national importance? Yes, Ms Muggins here!

Don't tell *me* that the responsibility of putting on a video of Toy Story 2 while you iron Simon's underpants is in any way comparable to filling the country's comment pages and provoking lively debate in the households of the nation's opinion formers?

No. It isn't. Which leaves us with only one sensible solution. These grasping (and frankly otherwise unemployable) young women should actually be paying *us* £22,000 for the privilege of having our delightful and stimulating children for company all day and enjoying the benefits of seeing them in school matches, nativity plays, carol concerts, afternoon clubs, birthday parties and all the other key events in their lives which their overworked parents miss out on due to the cruel pressure of modern work! What do you reckon?

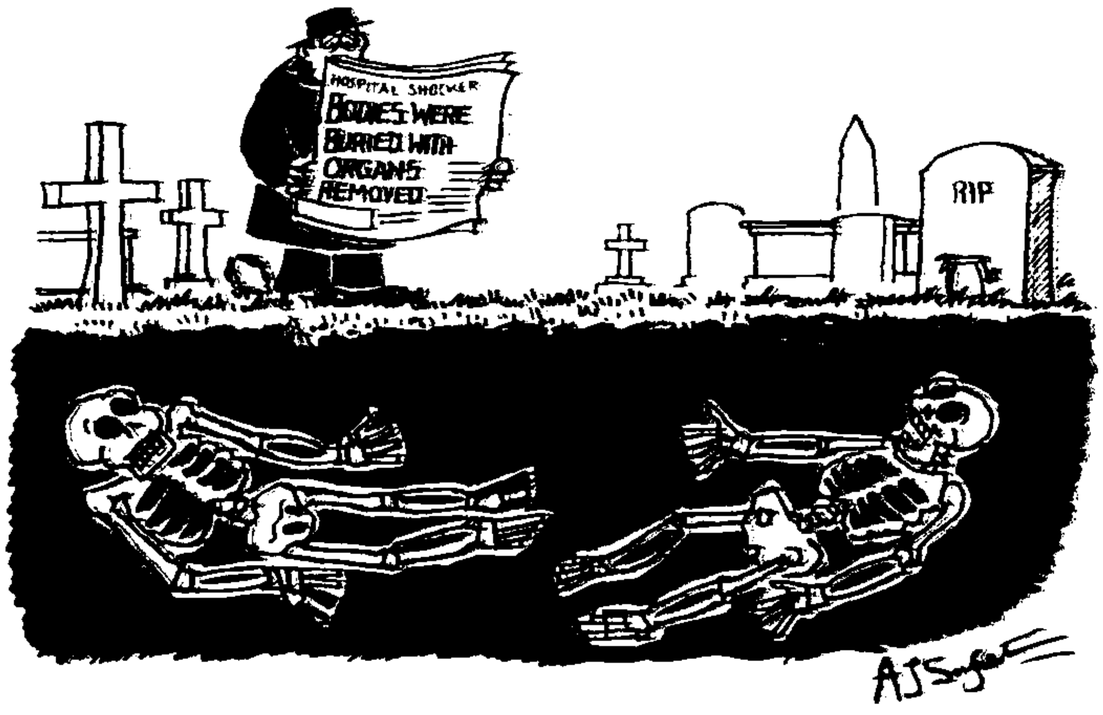
IT is now 37 days, 7 hours, 22 minutes and 4 seconds since my last column about giving up smoking. Believe me, I've been tempted to give in but, fingers crossed, I don't think I'll ever write about giving up smoking again!

© Polly Filler.

# A Doctor writes

AS A Doctor, I'm often asked: "Have you got any spare organs round the back, hearts, liver, kidneys, that sort of thing?" The simple answer is: "Yes, but it'll cost you." This is what we doctors call technically *Racketus spareparticus horribilis*, or in layman's language "a nice little earner" (*surely "bio-recycling"? Ed.*) If you are worried about bits of your dead child being flogged off to multi-national pharmaceutical companies, then you should ring the Daily Mail, who will try to make some more money out of you.

© *A. Doctor* 2001




*"Scandalous!"*

# DIARY

BADDIEL & SKINNER
UNPLANNED

**Baddiel**: Wooh! Thank you! Thank you! Great! Thank you!
**Skinner**: So...
**Baddiel**: Right...
**Skinner**: "So Right!" Sounds like a pop song by some bird like Sade!
*(Audience laughter)*
**Baddiel**: Yeah – sounds like a pop song by someone like Sade! Actually I always kind of fancied her basically. Wouldn't have minded giving her one!
**Skinner**: As the actress said to the bishop!! If there'd been an "L" in her name, she'd have been Slade. Wouldn't want to give her one then!
*(Audience laughter)*
**Baddiel**: Or Sadel!! Can you believe it?! Anyway, here we are. Back on the old crap sofa. Welcome to Baddiel and Skinner Unplanned – where Frank and me talk about just about anything that comes into our heads –
**Skinner**: Or doesn't as the case may be!
**Baddiel**: Yeah! Or doesn't as the case may be!
**Skinner**: So what are we going to talk about today, Dave?
**Baddiel**: Dunno, Frank! Whoops! We forgot to plan anything! Mind you – that's the whole point of the show. Otherwise it would be called "Baddiel and Skinner – Planned!"
*(Audience laughter)*
**Skinner**: Were you scratching your arse just then, Dave?
*(Audience laughter)*
**Baddiel**: Was I scratching my arse?
**Skinner**: I thought I saw you scratching your arse.
**Baddiel**: 'Nuff said!
*(Audience laughter)*
**Baddiel**: I suppose you're too posh to scratch your arse?
**Skinner**: Tell you what, I wouldn't half mind getting that Sade to scratch it for me, eh?
**Baddiel**: I wouldn't half mind getting that Sade to scratch it for me either!
*(Audience laughter)*
**Skinner**: So, what're we talkin' about today, Dave?
**Baddiel**: I wish I knew, Frank! So basically –
**Skinner**: You just pulled on your beard! Brilliant! Wish I had a beard to pull on!
**Baddiel**: You've only got your arse hair!
*(Audience laughter)*
**Skinner**: Genitals!
*(Audience laughter)*
**Baddiel**: Why d'you say that, Frank!?!?
**Skinner**: Just felt like it, Dave! Could be a bird's name, couldn't it – Jenny Tulls! Not my type! I'm straight!
**Baddiel**: Jenny Tulls! Sounds like the name of some bird!
*(Audience laughter)*
**Baddiel**: So... Right... Great... Yeah... I dunno, I think this sofa is pretty comfortable basically, don't you, Frank?
**Skinner**: You call it a sofa, do you?
**Baddiel**: Yeah, s'pose I do, basically. What d'you call it, then?
**Skinner**: Couch.
**Baddiel**: Couch? Sound a bit like "coach" to me!!!
**Skinner**: And you can't sit on a "coach", can you, mate!!?!
**Baddiel**: Actually basically you can!!!
**Skinner**: Just as long as it's not a *tennis* "coach", mate!!!
**Baddiel**: Just so long as it's not a *tennis* "coach"!!!
*(Audience laughter)*
**Skinner**: Any questions from the audience, then? Yeah – you lot out there! You choose, Frank – I'm bored with them.
**Baddiel**: Right, yeah, you – the thoroughly unfanciable woman with the crap hair in the blue sweater that looks like a dirty dishcloth!
*(Audience laughter)*
**Woman in audience**: If you went to a fancy-dress party, what would you go as?
*(Audience laughter)*
**Baddiel**: Basically, dunno really. What about um... let's see...
**Skinner**: You could take off yer trousers and go as a hairy arsehole!!!!!
**Baddiel**: On second thoughts, s'pose I could take off my trousers and go as a thoroughly hairy arsehole!!!!
**Skinner**: If push came to shove.
**Baddiel**: Hang about, what's all this push coming to shove? I'm not GAY you know! I'm STRAIGHT, me!! Yeah, well, basically... er... Next question! Yeah, you – the ugly bloke in the t-shirt which looks a bit like a um a t-shirt of some sort!
*(Audience laughter)*
**Man in audience**: How do you two keep it up?
*(Audience laughter, applause)*
**Skinner**: As the actress said to the bishop! Actually, I never have any trouble in that department, me!
**Baddiel**: No – I never have any trouble in that department! Um. Basically. Um. Like, when you say "Keep it up", do you mean "Keep it up" – or *"Keep it up"*!!?!?!!!
*(Audience laughter)*
**Skinner**: I'm bored stiff.
**Baddiel**: Stiff! Stiff!! I can't believe you said that on, like, live TV, Frank!!!
*(Audience laughter)*
**Skinner**: No, I mean it's really quite boring just sitting here in front of this lot, trying to think of something to say.
**Baddiel**: Yeah – something to say! Something – to – say. But at least we're being paid for it! This lot aren't getting a penny – and anyway they're all dead boring and ugly!!
*(Audience laughter, applause)*
**Skinner**: So, how much money have we earned since *(looks at watch in comical manner)* ooh, twenty minutes ago?
**Baddiel**: This is a real rubbish subject, Frank! I know – let's talk about toilet paper!!!!
**Skinner**: Another "crap" subject!!!
*(Audience laughter)*
**Baddiel**: Yeah, I guess you could call it another "crap" subject. After all, that's what the average bloke does on the toilet, isn't it – crap, I mean?!?!!!?!!?
*(Audience laughter and applause)*
**Baddiel**: Well – that's all we got time for!
**Skinner**: As the actress said to the bishop!!! Cheers!
*(Audience laughter, applause, etc, etc)*

*As told to*
CRAIG BROWN

I WAS WORRIED ABOUT WORKING WITH A CLASSICALLY TRAINED LYRICIST AS USUALLY I WRITE MY OWN WORDS...
BUT THIS COLLABORATION IS WORKING WONDERFULLY. THERE'S NO CULTURE CLASH BETWEEN US AT ALL...
LET'S GET PISSED TO CELEBRATE. THESE LYRICS ARE FANTASTIC.
I DON'T KNOW, GARY. IT SCANS FINE AND RHYMES WELL BUT I'M WORRIED ABOUT MY METRE...
TELL ME WHERE YOU'RE PARKED, MATE AND I'LL GET SOMEONE TO FEED IT FOR YOU...
ER...
WAITER!

# Literary Review

## Woe is me, me, me

**A Man Named Dave**
Dave Pelzer
*(Orion, 12.99)*
**Dead Babies**
Martin Amis
*(Penguin Film Tie-in, 6.99)*

IT USED to be that if you wanted to shift units you wrote about bonking. But now, post-*Angela's Ashes*, aspiring wordsmiths have twigged that unfathomable woe is the new tacky sex, and the high-priest of hardship, the godfather of grief is a man named Dave Pelzer.

Pelzer has been the darling of newspaper features pages for some time now, because he is both a bona fide bestseller (that's not Harry Potter), and he actually has a half-decent story to tell. As a child growing up in California he was relentlessly abused by his alcoholic mother, made to swallow ammonia, stabbed in the chest with a kitchen knife, forced to eat dog shit. The first two parts of his life story – *A Child Called "It"* and *The Lost Boy* – surfaced a few years ago and were immediately Oprah'd on to the bestseller lists where they have been encamped ever since.

*A Man Named Dave*, the final chapter, takes us from a brief resumé of former horrors to Dave's triumphant emergence as a best-selling author who has "changed the lives of millions". It's classic Hollywood triumph-over-adversity schmaltz, written in the time-honoured cornball style. For example, take a scene where things can't get any worse (Dave is skint; needs job to feed child) and then make them worse (Dave fails to get job due to totally unforeseeable catastrophe) and, if possible, slightly worse again (Dad dies of cancer; cat gets pulped in freak wheelie-bin accident). Serve with lashings of action-movie rhetoric ("Your father was a good man and one hell of a firefighter"), a smattering of quasi-Christian platitudes and top with a liberal dose of whatever you happen to think is the American Dream.

And if it needs saying, no, Dave can't write. He has a handful of stock epithets he appends at random, his sentence structure follows strict *Peter and Jane* guidelines and given the chance he'll always plump for the straight-to-video cliché. He's also picked-up the American predilection for using italics, *all the time*, which he is wont to do when us dumb-ass readers need a signpost to flag the moral bit.

One advantage of Dave's, er, no-nonsense style is that you can skim your way through the 350-odd pages in no time, as the start of every sentence tells you what's to come and that way you get to avoid the cod moralising. But a cursory flick is ill-advised: you'll miss some priceless nuggets of unintentional comedy, such as when the penny drops for Dave that the reason his Mother and Grandmother are similar is because they're related. "The manner in which Grandmother spoke, the tone of her words, was nearly a carbon copy of Mother's... A heartbeat later, I made the connection. *'Oh, my God!'*" Indeed.

Given what he's been through, this may all seem a trifle harsh. Dave never claimed to be Martin Amis – he's got a tale to tell and he says it as he saw it. And the peculiar tide of trauma that envelops poor Dave at every turn does encourage you to read on – a sort of literary rubbernecking, as the mind boggles as to just what else can go wrong, pausing only to admire the inventive cruelty of the gods as they put Dave through the mill once more.

Weigh it all up though, and this "hyperkinetic geek boy with baggage" (his words) is peddling scripted Oprah confessional to a public in desperate need of emotional hand-relief. A useful reminder that when someone says "You simply have to read this book", you simply don't.

Which leads us neatly on from Dave to Mart. Poles apart, you'd have said: Dave sells millions of books and is a worldwide celebrity; Mart is a worldwide celebrity and doesn't sell many books. Mart's back in the public eye now that his second novel *Dead Babies* has been made into a film. Plugging away to a *Sunday Telegraph* lapdog hack Amis quipped (with his usual complete, satanic arrogance): "At the risk of sounding completely, satanically arrogant, the only interesting point is whether you're gonna be read when you're gone... the only thing that really matters is the stuff you're not gonna be around for." One hesitates to suggest that there is another "interesting point": is Martin Amis even worth reading now?

Take *Dead Babies*: now re-issued, it takes a cast of predictable grotesques, has them take lots of drugs and talk pseud tosh, and then everyone has debauched sex with everyone else. Amis tacks on a sub-Agatha Christie murder plot in the last 50 pages and voilà, his Oxford yearbook becomes a novel.

Though only his second book, the Amis trademarks are all here — the dancing cadences, the visceral conceits, the relentless coinages and the syntactical jiggery-pokery. But reading it – trying to understand why the characters do what they do; what this is supposed to show us – something feels wrong. Whenever what you might generously term "the story" threatens to become interesting, up pops Mart, talking directly to the reader ("These are the six characters who answer to our purposes and we have taken them on ahead a small distance"), or just impinging with another barrage of his me-me rhetoric.

The feeling you get is that no one is enjoying this book as much as Mart himself. Beneath his tiresomely overwrought prose-style what Mart is really thinking about is future editions of the York Notes dedicated to M. Amis, imagining the A-Level questions in his honour – "Amis's *Dead Babies* as proto-punk tract. Discuss."

In other words, Mart's real interest in *Dead Babies* – and this continues throughout his fiction – is Mart. That's why his best piece of work in 30 years has been his memoir, *Experience*, whereas his novels remain little more than a useful source for the odd low-budget Britflick and, while he's busy writing them, a way of keeping him out of the papers.

## Books & Bookmen

■ THE *Daily Mail* of Friday 26 January whetted readers' appetites for the treats on offer in the next day's paper: yet another series on Princess Diana, Jenni Murray's guide to surviving the menopause – "PLUS: Did Himmler fake his own suicide? Read extracts from a sensational new book."

By Saturday, however, there was no trace of Himmler. At 2.30 on the Friday afternoon, it dawned on *Mail* executives that their Nazi serialisation would coincide with Holocaust Day. The first instalment of the "sensational new book" was postponed for a week, and the yawning gap in the paper was hastily filled with something far more tasteful and appropriate – four pages of drivel about Posh Spice.

■ MORE from troubled Metro, whence the "writer" Dr Raj Persaud has recently defected to Transworld and from whom the rights to Lynda Lee-Potter's *Class Act* have now been wrested back by her agent Desmond Elliott.

Staff were locked out of their offices for 12 days by bailiffs recently, following non-payment of rent. Though Susanne McDadd, Charles Lumsden and Co have been allowed back in, there have been so many departures that it is not clear who is left to staff the office.

■ EAGLE-EYED lawyer George Carman QC contacts us from his celestial chambers to correct an inaccuracy in the last Eye concerning the autobiography he was due to write. Before his death on 2 January his contract with publisher Fourth Estate had not been signed by both parties and nor had any money (let alone £500,000) changed hands. Carman's son Dominic now intends to write a biography of his father. Apologies for the confusion.

*'Bookworm'*

## POETRY CORNER

**ILL-INFORMED critics who doubt the ethical integrity of foreign minister Keith Vaz should study the summer 1973 issue of the *Latymerian*, magazine of Latymer upper school in Hammersmith. It includes the following poem by a boy in the upper fifth, young Nigel-Keith Vaz (as he then preferred to be known), demonstrating his contempt for "humanitarian interventions" and similar foreign office humbug:**

*As diplomats do treaties sign,*
*They smile and shake each other's hand,*
*Each thinking as he does his deed,*
*"They've ended up with much more land".*
*As time goes on, each beaded eye,*
*Watches with glee the lapsing law,*
*Then news reassures that all is well,*
*But diplomats proclaim "It's War!"*

*Peace now completed, other treaties signed,*
*New thoughts slink through those diplomatic minds,*
*The people cheer that "peace is concluded"*
*But they once again have been deluded.*
*The circle continues endlessly round,*
*The double-dealing diplomats are profound,*
*In rhetorically announcing Peace is at hand*
*When their troops arrive in a foreign land.*

# IN THE BACK

# Lockerbie: THREE LORDS A-LEAPING TO CONCLUSIONS

Megrahi (left) and Fimah (right)

***NOW WE KNOW THAT THIS MAN PLANTED A BOMB ON FLIGHT 103, KILLING 270 PEOPLE AT LOCKERBIE.*** **Thus, with a picture of Abdel Baset Ali Mohmed Ali Megrahi, the Libyan intelligence agent convicted of the Pan Am bombing, ran the headline in the Independent on 1 February – and thus, in varying degrees of hysteria and sensationalism, pretty well the entire British media.**

The problem, however, is that after reading the 90 paragraphs of judgement produced by the three judges presiding over the interminable Lockerbie trial at Camp Zeist in Holland, no one knows any such thing. The judgement does not prove the guilt of Megrahi or anyone else. Instead it slips again and again into the same sort of reckless assumptions which led to the great British injustices south of the border of the last 30 years – the Birmingham Six, the Guildford Four, Judy Ward, the Bridgewater Four and countless others.

So what was the "case" against Megrahi? The judges summed it up under three headings.

## THE MALTESE CONNECTION

**The essence of the prosecution case was that the bomb that brought down Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie 12 years ago was first planted on an aircraft at Luqa airport, Malta, whence it travelled to Frankfurt. There, it apparently changed planes to London, where it changed planes again on to the doomed flight bound for the US.**

What was the evidence from Luqa that the bomb went on a plane there? None whatsoever. The 55 bags that went on the suspect plane were all counted into the plane and checked against the passenger list. All 55 arrived safely at Frankfurt. No one saw anything in Malta to suggest that any unaccompanied bag had got into the plane.

Mr Megrahi was at the airport that morning. He left on a quite different flight. He didn't have any baggage and nobody saw him do anything remotely to indicate that he had smuggled a bag on to the plane to Frankfurt.

The judges were obliged to admit (paragraph 39): "If therefore the unaccompanied bag was launched from Luqa, the method by which it was done is not established, and the crown accepted that they could not point to any specific route by which the primary suitcase [with the bomb in it] could have been loaded... The absence of any explanation of the method by which the suitcase might have been placed on board KM180 [the flight from Malta to Frankfurt] is a major difficulty for the Crown case..."

That difficulty arose from the awkward fact that the guilt of the accused depended entirely on the unproved theory that the bomb went on the plane at Malta. If the crown could not prove that it went on there, it could not prove the guilt of the accused.

Unable to prove anything in Malta, the crown case shifted to Frankfurt airport where a single computer print-out appeared to show that an unaccompanied bag went on the flight to Heathrow, from where the doomed flight eventually took off. The timing of the mysterious appearance at the airport of this bag, according to the computer print-out, made it possible in time that the bag could have come on the flight from Malta. Possible, but not certain, and certainly not proved.

There was a further problem for this theory. The suspect bag at Frankfurt, if it ever existed, would have been part of a consignment of baggage taken for x-ray. The x-ray would almost certainly have revealed the explosive device, especially as Frankfurt staff had been warned only two months previously to keep a special watch out for explosive devices.

The judges were able to dispose of this objection on the grounds that the training given to the workers in charge of the x-ray at Frankfurt was "poor", and the bomb might not have been noticed (par 34).

But might the bomb have been put on Pan Am 103 at Heathrow, shortly before it went off? There was evidence here from two Heathrow workers, reported in the last *Eye*. John Bedford said that a container with luggage bound for Pan Am 103 was left unattended for three quarters of an hour before take-off. He said that when he returned to the container, there were two extra suitcases in it, including a "maroony-brown" Samsonite case of the kind in which the bomb exploded over Lockerbie. Mr Bedford said that another worker, a Mr Sulkash Kamboj, had told him he put the two cases there. Mr Kamboj denied he'd said that. The judges believed Mr Bedford, not Mr Kamboj.

## THE TIMER IN THE SHIRT

**A fragment of a circuit board found at Lockerbie after the crash came from a set of timers sold to Libya by a firm in Zurich. This fragment took up a lot of lawyers' time throughout the trial. It was discovered, miraculously, three weeks after the bombing and caught up in a charred shirt from the wreckage of the plane. When local policeman DC Gilchrist found the item he labelled it "cloth (charred)".**

Sutherland

Coulsfield

Maclean

Some time later (no one knew how long) this was "overwritten by the word debris". "There was," say the judges (par 13), "no satisfactory explanation as to why this was done, and DC Gilchrist's attempts to explain it were at worst evasive and at best confusing." On the other hand, the judges concluded, "there does not appear to be any particular reason for the alteration of the label."

One reason they did not even consider was that an item labelled "cloth" could not normally be expected to contain anything significant, while anything might be found in an item labelled "debris". The judges went on to explain how the item was examined closely by government scientists without revealing that one of those scientists, a Dr Thomas Hayes, was a prominent witness in the case which resulted in the monstrously false convictions of the Maguire family in the 1980s and another, a Mr Allen Fereday OBE, was criticised in another case in which he had said that a timer "could only have been used and manufactured for a terrorist operation" (see *Eye* 841, 11 March 1994). Nor did the judges comment on the fact that the FBI agent to whom the suspect timer was delivered for investigation, Tom Thurman, had been denounced by one of his own colleagues for "fabricating evidence" and was subsequently "removed" (*Eyes*, 907, 917).

What did the judges have to say about Edwin Bollier, the Swiss businessmen who made the timers and sold some to intelligence agents in Libya, including Megrahi to whom Bollier rented offices in Zurich? Mr Bollier and his two company colleagues were, said the judges, "unreliable witnesses". They explained: "Earlier statements they made to the police and judicial authorities were at times in conflict with each another and the evidence they gave in court". One fancy tale told by Mr Bollier, said the judges, "belongs in our view to the realm of fiction". Mr Bollier did indeed supply timers to Libya. He also supplied them to the Stasi, the secret police in East Germany.

## TONY GAUCI

**What of the man who seems to have more influence over the judges than anyone else – Tony Gauci, the owner of a clothes shop in Sliema, Malta, from which some clothes in the bomb suitcase were bought? His identification of Megrahi 10 years after he says he saw him in his shop is described by the judges as "a highly important element in the case". But the pitiful story of Mr Gauci's identifications could grace any of the illustrious miscarriages of justice that have polluted British criminal history.**

When Scottish police officers went to see him in 1989, less than a year after the bombing, they were not hunting Libyans. They were hunting a Palestinian terrorist gang, and therefore were hoping that the shopkeeper would identify one of their suspects. Again and again in the ensuing months police showed Mr Gauci photographs of suspects. He could not identify any of them, but he did say from the outset that the man who bought the clothes was a big man, some six feet tall, aged about 50. (Megrahi is five foot eight inches and in 1988 was 37).

When did the man visit the shop? That date too became a mystery. Mr Gauci said he'd been alone because his brother was watching a football match. The police narrowed the possible dates of the match to two: 23 November and 7 December 1988. Mr Gauci had said that it was raining when the man came, and he'd bought an umbrella. The defence called a Major Mifsud, a senior meteorologist from Luqa, five miles away. He said it was raining on 23 November, but not on 7 December. The judges concluded that the visit had taken place on 7 December, grasping at a straw offered by Mifsud who said there was a slender chance (about 10 percent) that there had been a slight shower on the evening of 7 December. Rather more important, probably, was the fact that Mr Megrahi was in Malta on 7 December but not on 23 November.

The judges decided that Mr Gauci's identification was "reliable" (par 67), adding the rather bizarre rider: "There are situations where a careful witness who will not commit himself beyond saying that there is a close resemblance can be regarded as more reliable and convincing in his identification than a witness who maintains that his identification is 100 percent." The vaguer the better, in other words.

On the basis of not being able to prove that the bomb went on a plane at Malta; on the fact that Bollier's company sold some timers to Libya and rented offices to Megrahi in Zurich, and on the slightly strained identification by Tony Gauci, the judges convicted Ali Megrahi of the biggest murder in British criminal history.

At the same time they acquitted the man who was named throughout the trial as Megrahi's accomplice, Al Amin Khalifa Fimah. They rejected in the strongest possible language the evidence of Abdul Majid, the chief witness against Fimah (par 42).

Majid was a junior Libyan intelligence agent and vehicle maintenance man in the pay of the CIA who only remembered his "evidence" against either defendant several months after the bombing when the CIA threatened to cut off his money. The judges did not even ask why this exotic liar and informer was produced to give evidence. The answer seems obvious. The CIA was using its paid hack to frame one of the defendants.

Had the judges come to that conclusion, they were in danger of moving on to a rather more serious analysis: that the entire expensive trial of the Libyans was an intelligence frame-up; and that among those most comprehensively hoodwinked were Lord Sutherland, Lord Coulsfield, and Lord Maclean.

"We are also aware," said the judges in their peroration (89), "that there is a danger that by selecting parts of the evidence that seem to fit together and ignoring parts which might not fit, it is possible to read into a mass of conflicting evidence a conclusion which is not entirely justified." So aware were they of the dangers of that course of action indeed that they proceeded faithfully to follow it.

# MMR: MYTHING THE POINT

**NOW that some doctors as well as parents are beginning to question ministers and health officials' assertions about the safety of the MMR vaccine, the debate over the triple jab has assumed a spiteful edge.**

Not content with rubbishing Dr Andrew Wakefield (see last *Eye*), whose only offence has been to champion his young autistic and curiously bowel-diseased patients, raise questions about the vaccine and demand more research, vitriol is now being poured on parents whose concern for their children's safety is making them ask for single doses.

Documents circulating under the title of *MMR Vaccine – Myth and Fact* among health authority immunisation officers and GPs as part of the current push to restore MMR confidence include the suggestion that parents who do not have their children vaccinated are selfish, reckless criminals. "An unimmunised child is the infectious equivalent of a drunk driver," it states.

The author of this report is one Mike Watson – medical director of Aventis Pasteur MSD – who as a manufacturer of MMR is naturally keen to spread the good word. Except that in his attempts to sort fact from fiction, Watson himself seems to have been more than a little "economical with the actualité".

For example, in his "myth three" attempt to dissuade parents obtaining separate measles, mumps and rubella vaccines from Europe, Watson suggests they might be buying a second rate strain of the mumps vaccine, of which there is a choice of three. The Urabe strain, he writes, was replaced here in 1992 after it was "rarely" associated with "severe headaches".

Actually the Urabe strain was used in the MMR vaccines, Immravax and Pluserix, in this country between 1988 and 1992. Both were hastily withdrawn in 1992 after they were found to cause not "rare" but unusually high rates (more than 1 in 11,000) of potentially fatal aseptic mumps meningitis – er, a little more than a "severe headache", the *Eye* would suggest. And Watson should know because his company, then Merieux UK, manufactured the dodgy Immravax. Smith Kline Beecham produced the other.

And here are two more important "facts" he left out. When those MMR vaccines were licensed here in 1988, an identical vaccine containing the Urabe strain produced by Smith Kline Beecham and called Trivirex had already been withdrawn from Canada because of suspected links to aseptic mumps meningitis. This no doubt would have passed unnoticed by our government scientists responsible for licensing because — as we now know courtesy of the BSE inquiry — the department was then a shambles. But it could not have passed unnoticed by MMR manufacturers.

Yet as late as 1997 the Smith Kline Beecham Urabe MMR jab was used in a mass vaccination programme in Brazil and caused, yes, an outbreak of aseptic meningitis.

In "Myth 4 – MMR vaccine has been banned in Japan", Watson happily states that an MMR vaccine containing the Urabe strain of mumps was withdrawn "due to high rates of aseptic meningitis". No doubt there he can call a spade "meningitis" and not "severe headaches" because the vaccine was of Japanese manufacture and not of his company. He suggests that because no other alternative MMR is available in Japan, "they were forced to recommend single measles and rubella vaccines". Actually the Japanese health authorities considered alternatives and have decided they did not want them.

That a drug company representative produces contentious material is not perhaps surprising. That the department of health is also circulating similar material as part of its £3m campaign to restore faith in the MMR vaccine is.

**Dr Andrew Wakefield**

A fortnight ago, after Andrew Wakefield published his second paper which questioned the swift decision to license the vaccines because they were not adequately tested over a sufficient period of time, the department of health (which had had his paper for several months) issued a 15-page response in which it accused Dr Wakefield of being "highly selective". "It is easy for scaremongering to sap public confidence by biased presentations that are contrary to the large amount of data that provide real reassurance," it said.

But as the last *Eye* pointed out, the "large amount of data" the department has been relying upon and which it repeats in its 15-page document – a study in Finland, a Committee for the Safety of Medicines review of reports from parents and doctors and the Taylor report – do nothing to address any issues of regressive autism, rare bowel disease and vaccination.

In fact "highly selective and biased" could equally apply to its 15-page document. For example, it records that the Medical Research Council brought in experts to review Dr Wakefield's original work in 1998. They concluded that "there is no evidence to indicate any link between MMR vaccination and bowel disease or autism and there is therefore no reason for a change in the current MMR policy".

But minutes of the meeting show it concluded there was "CURRENTLY no evidence to support a link" and that "further research, probably on an international basis to include a sufficiently large number of patients, would be needed to settle the question of any possible association between autism and MMR vaccination."

The 15-page paper – like Watson – also cites the Japanese experience, with its system of separate vaccines, and says that between 1992 and 1997 there were 79 Japanese deaths from measles, while during the same period in the UK there was none. Except that statistics from the Public Health Laboratories reveal 10 deaths in the UK from measles during that five-year period.

The paper also cites a 1971 American study as proof that Wakefield's claim that most pre-licence studies had a maximum follow up on only 28 days is incorrect. The health department said it had a six to nine-week follow up for adverse events. Except that the six to nine weeks only applied to a pilot study of 30 children. The bulk, 680, were monitored for only 28 days.

And in January 1990 Dr David Salisbury, in his role as senior medical officer on the Committee of Safety of Medicines, admitted that before the MMR vaccine was introduced "we carried out a large scale study where adverse events were monitored in a three-week period in approximately 12,000 children".

And so the war of words goes on. This is no help to parents trying to weigh up the risks of vaccination against the risks of serious and potentially killer diseases. But £3m spent on proper research instead of spin would be a help.

Instead we find out, courtesy of Tony Blair, that the government is coughing up only £344,000 to "fund one of the largest studies ever attempted to find the causes of autism", led by Professor Andrew Hall. Blair admits in a letter written in December to MP Stephen Ladyman about what the government was doing to address the issue of autism, that there has been a large increase in the number of children with autism in recent years, for which the full explanation is "not clear". As the *Eye* reported last week, it has shot up to 1 in 100 in some areas.

On the issue of MMR and autism Blair concludes: "MMR is the safest way for parents to protect their children against potentially serious diseases." No doubt Leo will be having his.

# ZONES OF CONTENTION

**JANUARY ended with two blows to "new" Labour's "privatise education" policy — but neither deterred the government's privatiser-in-chief, education minister Estelle Morris.**

First, the national audit office (NAO) published its study of the first 25 education action zones. Under this scheme local businesses were expected to give money to local schools in return for the power to remodel the curriculum. But the NAO discovered that "many zones experienced difficulty in meeting the department's initial requirements and expectations. The result was that in the early days of their existence, some zones were spending large sums of public money before they had sound financial controls in place, creating risks of poor accounting, impropriety or poor value for money".

Impropriety? That's a strong word from the NAO. Still the expected business cash never arrived. While all kinds of firms are queuing up to get money out of schools through the government's privatisation of education, the same firms were rather more reluctant to give money *to* schools. The department for education and employment predicted the zones would raise £2,562,000 from businessmen keen to be responsible corporate citizens. In fact only £1,296,000, or around half, turned up. Much of this isn't actual cash money but merely "services in kind" like "strategic advice" from local firms charged at imaginary rates. Only a few zones exceeded their "targets" – notably Newham and Southwark in London. These zones are handily close to parliament and involve firms including PriceWaterhouseCoopers, Arthur Andersen and Capita, who can all expect big government contracts in return for their generosity.

While business was ungenerous the government poured nearly £19m of taxpayers' money into the zones. And what happened to it? The NAO found that zones were using "creative accounting" – like getting suppliers to alter dates on invoices or simply passing the money on to schools "wrongly believing that this discharged their responsibility". One zone "bought several years' supply of book bags for pupils in order to use their funds"; another "agreed to make an unnecessarily large payment for services provided by the local authority while waiting to receive a formal invoice".

None of this seems to have worried Estelle Morris, who ignored the detail of the NAO report and scotched rumours that the scheme was to be allowed to die quietly by promptly announcing 14 new education action zones.

The second blow for Morris was the news that Haringey council had rejected all the bids to privatise the local education authority. When the privatisation was announced, Morris applauded "this radical new venture". But this is the second time the bids had been rejected. Last year local MP David Lammy and Haringey councillors were so unimpressed by pisspoor presentations from Group 4, Serco, Cambridge Education Associates and WS Atkins that all the bids were rejected.

In an attempt to save face Morris encouraged a national lottery-style solution and bidders were asked to re-tender. However, even after the re-tender the bids were still useless and were rejected. In the meantime the Haringey education authority has been left to rot. Most experienced staff jumped ship. The only winner is PriceWaterhouseCoopers who were forced on the council as "consultants" and grabbed huge fees for "advising" on the privatisation disaster.

Haringey, the DfEE and PWC all refuse to say how much public money the firm bagged in fees, insisting that the figures are "commercial in confidence". Councillor Bob Harris, who resigned as chairman of education in protest at the hare-brained plan, puts the figure at "hundreds of thousands of pounds".

Again, none of this will deter Morris. The next LEA to get the privatisation treatment is South Tyneside, which failed its Ofsted inspection at the beginning of this year. A "team of consultants" is about to be appointed. This is just a few miles from North Tyneside, represented in parliament by cabinet minister, Socialist Educational Association member and once fervent opponent of education privatisation, Stephen Byers.

***You can contact Paul Foot on 020 7287 3183 or the In the Back team on 020 7437 4017***

# In the City

UNNOTICED and unexplained in the blizzard of publicity which has swirled around every politician's best friend, the Hinduja brothers, is the curious role that the war-torn and impoverished West African state of Liberia plays in their celebrated generosity. Even the £1m pumped into the dome's faith zone came indirectly from the country best known in recent years for bloodthirsty dictators and illicit diamond smuggling but with little obvious link to the generous brothers.

Their British-based charity, the Hinduja Foundation, gave the cash to the dome and so expedited their urgently needed (in case the Indian authorities withdrew their passports over the £21m Bofors kickback) British passports with a little help from their friends Mandelson and Vaz.

But that million, like all the money dished out by the British foundation, came from the Hinduja Foundation (Liberia). This is not actually based in Liberia but is to be found inside the Geneva offices of the brothers' Amas Bank in Switzerland. Over the past four years the Liberian foundation has pumped more than £1,750,000 into the British charity. Where this money comes from is unclear.

Another recent beneficiary of this Liberian largesse was the charity Jewish Care, whose biggest fundraiser is none other than Lord Levy, Tony Blair's close pal and the hunter of major Labour donors. Jewish Care received £5,000 in 1999 from the generous Hindujas who had obtained one passport and were seeking two more. Once British citizens they could of course also be Labour donors.

Which may explain Lord Levy's schmoozing of the Hindujas as the passport and Bofors problems could explain the Hindujas' sudden interest in Jewish Care — to which the devout Hindus had not given previously. There are also Hinduja foundations in India and the US as well as a Hinduja Foundation (Europe), also based out of Amas Bank. So why should the British foundation be funded out of a foundation notionally at least in Liberia?

The West African state is one of the world's most opaque offshore secrecy and tax havens. Liberian companies do not have to make public any information other than their address. Foundations are unlikely to be different if registered there. Best known for its shipping register, Liberia was also for many years (until civil war drove out most business) a favourite choice for those seeking to escape prying eyes. But doubtless the Hindujas and their foundation have sound commercial reasons for being in Liberia. Shipping perhaps; though certainly not diamonds — even if India is one of the leading cutting and polishing centres.

But then little about the Hinduja brothers is what it seems. Much of what is known is the official family version. The rest is shrouded in mystery and contradiction. Like Mohamed Fayed, another less successful British passport seeker who also sought out politicians bearing gifts and invitations, the Hindujas arrived in Britain full grown with a ready-made history of family wealth from first Iran and then India. And just like the phoney pharaoh, much of what is claimed for the Hindujas — such as their billionaire status — is difficult to pin down never mind justify.

They are of course wealthy. But perhaps not as wealthy as their supporters would have the world believe. That is certainly the verdict of those British and US bankers who have had reason to do business with them. It was also the view of the Bank of England, which considered their credentials to launch the proposed British Asian Bank, unkindly dubbed the "Son of BCCI", in the mid-90s.

As disclosed here in *Eye* 974 almost two years ago, the Bank of England discouraged the Hindujas from pursuing their banking ambitions here. The escalating Bofors affair probably played a part but more so it was the lack of detailed information about their finances. Post-BCCI the Bank of England wanted to be certain that there would be a lender of last resort should the British Asian Bank hit problems. Not only did it not see the billionaire brothers as meeting that role, but it became clear that they would anyway be minority partners. Nor were those British banks approached to participate — HSBC and Royal Bank of Scotland had talks — prepared to play that role. So the British Asian Bank quietly died and the Bank of England breathed a sigh of relief.

In Switzerland too the brothers faced some opposition in obtaining approval to open Amas Bank before being successful. There was a conflict of opinion between the banking regulators, who were in favour, and law enforcement officials who were less enthusiastic and not just as a result of the Bofors scandal. The Hindujas spent the 90s trying fruitlessly to prevent Indian investigators obtaining access to bank accounts they controlled which the Indians claim had received commissions from the £715m arms deal. Something the Hindujas deny as they initially objected to any link to the bank accounts.

That legal battle sparked both the initially rejected bid for British citizenship in 1990 and the later successful applications in 1997 (Gopichand) and 1999 (Srichand). The brothers clearly felt that as British citizens they stood a better chance of avoiding extradition over Bofors — especially with the Tory, Liberal and Labour friends in high places they assiduously courted after they were refused passports in 1991.

There is a Commonwealth extradition agreement between Britain and India. But certainly there have been few extraditions of Indian fugitives to Britain and Britain would be unlikely to rush to return the lack of favour for wanted British citizens. "GP" and "SP" obtained their passports notionally on the basis of their residence in and connections with Britain. The Bofors matter was not allowed to stand in their way even though the Indian inquiry was hot and heavy.

No doubt the phoney pharaoh wishes that home secretary Jack Straw had been as forgiving. Especially as his British business interests would appear far more substantial than those of the favoured brothers. "GP" and "SP" appear to be directors of no British companies but are trustees of the Hinduja Foundation. Ironically, their Swiss-based brother Prakash is a director of British companies. He too inquired about a British passport but thought better of it. All of which also raises another parallel with Fayed which could well embarrass the Hindujas' great friend, "Lord Rama" Blair.

The Hindujas, like many other Asians, Arabs and Greeks, were key beneficiaries of the Tory government's rejection of a Revenue initiative to remove the non-tax paying privileges of foreigners living in Britain. So as British citizens with British homes, are Gopichand and Srichand also British taxpayers? If so, on their world wide income as UK residents or just on what they pay themselves or receive in the UK from their offshore interests? How is all their hospitality and largesse funded if not from UK source income? If from abroad, how is that accounted for to the taxman? Who pays for the upkeep of their palatial Whitehall homes and is that not a taxable benefit? Are the brothers among the small group of non-domiciled UK residents who have cut secret fixed annual payment deals with the Revenue based on their own estimate of their UK income? The Revenue is currently seeking, not surprisingly, to revoke a similar deal with Fayed where they believe they were conned. No doubt the taxman has no such criticisms of the hospitable Hindujas.

## Stock Horror

### TONY DYE

**■ "Retired" former chief investment officer at fund manager Phillips and Drew, has made a remarkable comeback with his new hedge fund, Dye Asset Management, which has just opened for business with £200m from investors.**

**£200m invested in Dye's mixed fund at Phillips and Drew in 1995 would have made £88m LESS by last year than money simply put in a stock-market "tracker" fund.**

WORD from across the Atlantic is that crook and ex-bankrupt Roger Levitt has returned to the world of financial services after an unsuccessful period attempting to become a boxing promoter. Clearly, for once the regulators in New York would seem somewhat more generous and forgiving than their City opposite numbers who would be unlikely to entertain such a Levitt comeback.

THE latest humiliation for the Department of Timidity & Inaction from a failed insider-dealing prosecution — the case against former Hoare Govett broker Jonathan Townsend was thrown out on the basis of no case to answer in December — may not bode well for stiffening their resolve to deal with the City Slickers. Some wonder if the DTI may opt for the safer option of publishing their findings rather than prosecution thereby achieving the purpose of "naming and shaming" without the risk of the Slickers, *Mirror* editor Piers Morgan and their friends escaping through a legal loophole.

Certainly Slicker Anil Bhoyrul tells all who will listen that he and partner James Hipwell will escape prosecution. A point he will no doubt stress at his upcoming industrial tribunal hearing against the *Mirror* unless the DTI intervenes beforehand.

Meanwhile the Townsend legal ruling was another high profile embarrassment for increasingly luckless QC Alan Suckling. Since convicting fraudster Peter Clowes, some might say not the most difficult of tasks, Suckling had seen his prosecutions of Kevin and Ian Maxwell for pension fraud and boxing promoter Frank Warren for VAT fraud result in jury acquittals. An unenviable hat-trick.

***'Slicker'***

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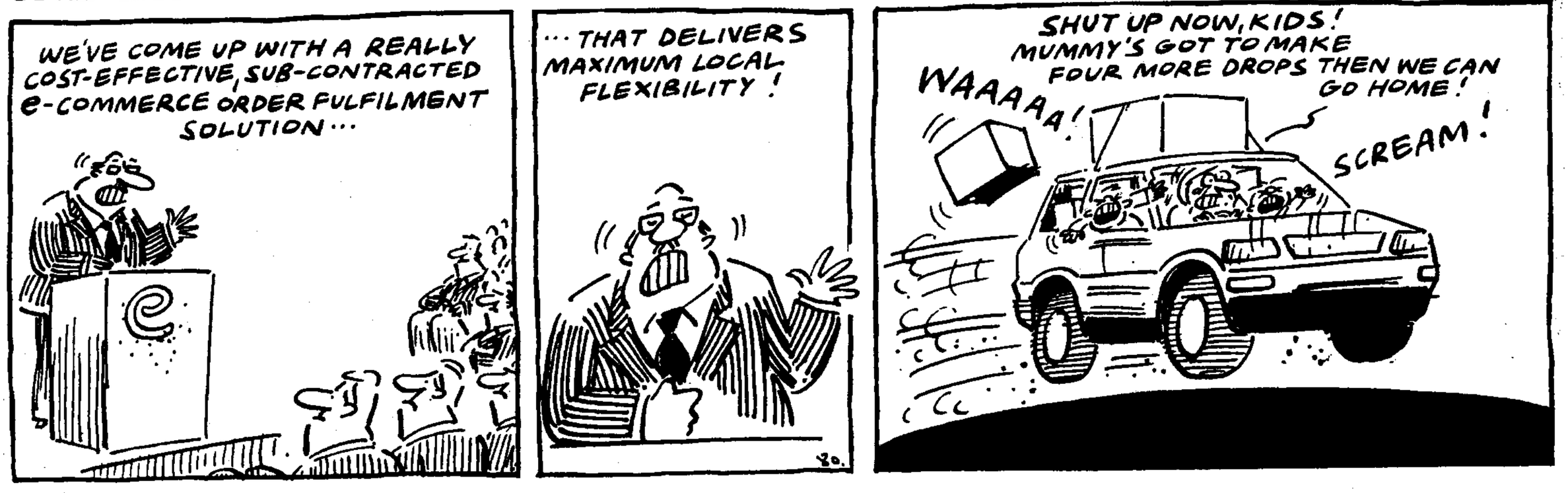
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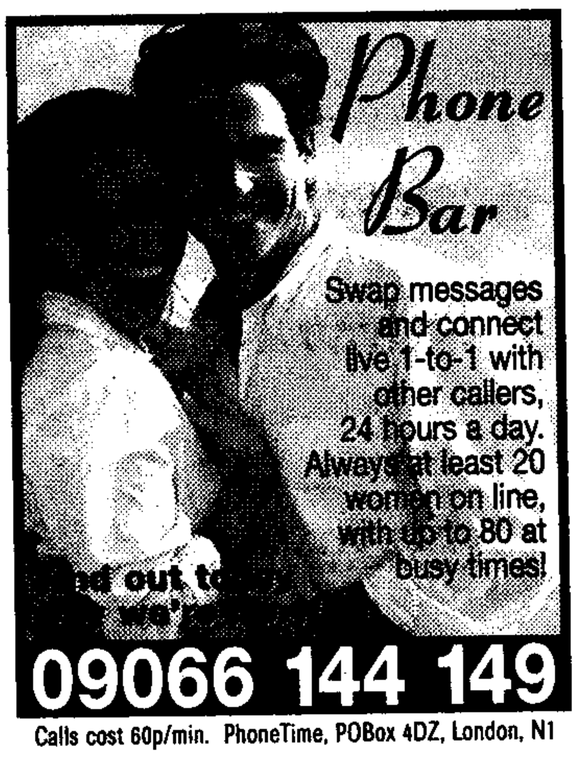
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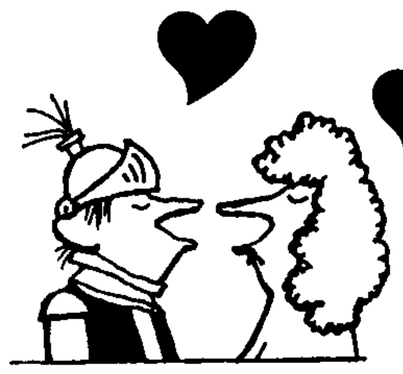

# VALENTINE MESSAGES 2001

❤ BEANNIE – still ditto to infinity. BAGBUSS.

❤ YOU'RE the one for me, Fatty. Love always, F.

❤ CAROL – love you lots. DOUGLAS. P.S. It's your turn to take bloody Zoe out.

❤ PACHYDERM at the Stanhope Arms: Valentine's Day is on the 16th (can't wait).

❤ BABES you know I love you to bits and bats – from J.

❤ CAPITAINE, you spin my heart around. ILY – SOUS-FIFRE.

❤ FLUFFY BUNNY, your jock strap loves you, 9/10 CDB – XXX

❤ IF CAR formerly of Cambridge will contact the Hemingford Foundation she may learn something to her disadvantage.

❤ THE BOY KETTLE. Be my valentine and I promise to protect you from those elephants. PIXIE. P.S. Here I am.

❤ TIGGS – you're my sun, my moon and my stars. Forever. Love P.

❤ YEAH BABY! Let's get our copy of The Good Web Guide to Sex and doooooo it!!! from your International Man of Mystery – www.thegoodwebguide.co.uk

❤ I LOVE YOU DAVID – from your Dolly.

❤ RONNIE, love till the pondskaters kiss – lust till the cows come home. SUE.

❤ WHEWELL – William Toulouse-Lautrec Short Arse, I.L..Y.

❤ CAERDYDD BARBIE – Ruby wife, best friend, mentor, life companion, mother, grandmother, treasurer, and lover. It gets better. Love you always. MAD PATRICK.

❤ BERTIE: Your close embraces are the best. Let me come and melt the buttons on your Leslie Vest. Love always – HENRY'S MUM.

❤ I'M SPOKE FOR!! aku cinta Enggang saya, kiri dan selalu.

❤ THE CLAIREYCAT I the love the you the x the x the x the x.

❤ TOP CHICK be a smart happy Moose – Love inept e-mailor – MARRY ME.

❤ PSSssst... A valentinely message to my darling marina-guy and favourite beachcomber from the gull what loves you. Wood you get my drift? Shell I spell it out or be stonily silent? (It wood surf you right, dune you think, for all the puns I've almost uncomplainingly endured!) ILY – V.

❤ FLUFFY WUFFY BUNNIKINS Let's snuggle up together with The Good Web Guide to Sex and a vindaloo Honey Monster x x x www.thegoodwebguide.co.uk

❤ SPROGGIT molehusband makes MRS MOUSEY bounce.

❤ TO SQUDGIE – love from your 2 boys.

❤ BUN BEAR love you – Allison.

❤ T – I love you all the way round and back again forever – S.

❤ XRAY-DELTA-ONE this is mmmission control. Come here and fix my AE35 Unit – Traaansmission concluded.

❤ BIG ONE, be my surf dude forever.

❤ ICKLE WICKLE STICKLEBACK. The oysters are in the fridge, the champagne on ice, and The Good Web Guide to Sex is under the bed from your Big Brown Bear X X X www.thegoodwebguide.co.uk

❤ C.McK – With all the love in the world, sweetheart. P.L.

❤ JAMES – Mrs. Cook loves you. Thinking of you.

❤ CONSERVATIVE 'MAN' loves forever 'LABOUR' MOOSE.

❤ DEBBI DOGGI loves NORTI PIGGI.

❤ SHIRLEY WOOD – still love you. Chubble or trouble?

❤ I LOVED YOU THEN, I love you now. Fifty years between. In all these months – and all those years. Thrice but briefly seen. JIM

❤ ITS STILL a wonderful idea Sue (celebsays@hotmail.com)

❤ ONE DAY my prince will come... But until then The Good Web Guide to Sex will do fine, thank you very much Snow White – www.thegoodwebguide.co.uk

❤ 30 DAYS Crazy Dancer of Paris – always my true love.

❤ HAPPY VALENTINES to me gorgeous boyf.

❤ ANU DENTER: Love your big thighs and moonface. Where's my ring? N xxx.

❤ 242 At 5.10, true happiness ; SW3 absolute misery.

❤ TEN YEARS ON. You have thrown things at me, pushed me out of a plane and let strange men fondle you. I have lost all our money, made us homeless twice – no one has even made a pass at me. Shall we give it another go? RUSHMORE.

❤ ALISON – I loved you from the moment I first met you. P.S. Can I do your washing up.

❤ FÜR KATHI, meine deutsche Vogel – ich liebe dich.

❤ HOMER J. FOREMAN – no slushing, I promise. GRUBBY OLD WITCH. PS: you're good and I enjoy you.

❤ TAME BUILDER? One day, please. We love you – K and D xxx

❤ ROSES ARE RED, wenches are pink, you are the one I fancy I think.

❤ JUDITH, you're a wonderful woman, miss you from my time at Le, pity it wasn't meant to be. JAY.

❤ MONKEY – Happy Valentines. Love your fur. NATURE BOY.

❤ DR. DEBORAH SIMPSON – let's celebrate 10 years together!

❤ W – BE SMOOTH and UNLIMITED T-TIME will be yours always. Luv SP.

❤ IPSWICH NO. 1, Man U 2 – Number One – I am crazy about you.

❤ B.U.R.M.A Or N.O.R.W.I.C.H? Kiss Me Erotically, Number One Wife.

❤ WELSH MONOPOLY, pool, and Shapla with lots of snuggles, usness, and maybe...?"

❤ PHANTOM KISSER will always love HONEY POT in spare room.

❤ IN ALL THE UNIVERSE for eternity, I sincerely love you and Super Moose.

❤ JOHNNY, 12 years – from Cardboard City to Holby City – no regrets. HARRIET.

❤ 7.42 IS YOU

❤ DEAR SQUEAKS – Hoping you will still be my Valentine. From YOUR FAT AFRICAN.

❤ SMIDGE-THERMALS, – £15; buy of the year.(In the sale!), HECTOR.

❤ ROSES ARE RED, violets are blue/ The bees like both and so do you/ The bees will settle for expensive wine/ But I want you as my Valentine.

❤ PRINCESS – you've got my heart. I want your hand. DRAGON.

❤ FOR THE E. A. JUGGLER – The question's academic, It requires no great polemic. Which city? It's irrelevant; This Hannibal's sans elephant. For he's the greatest Lecteur, My Polymath Protector. Though we did not, the year has flown; More e-mail, than the dog and bone. I hope so much next year will see. More sparks than even Volume Three.

❤ AMANDA BOTTOM, L.O.L and spunky sleep – HUGGY BEAR.

❤ HONEYBUNCH – thanks for 5yrs, with Ginge. C.

❤ DEAR DROPPIE – This year I thought I would try, to send you my love through Private Eye. (Finally and long overdue!) Shit loads M.

❤ FOR THE FROG on my lilypad – I'll swim with you to sweetpeas and love you always with glee...the stowaway xox

❤ PIG ON A BIKE – very, very, tasty, tasty. luv M

❤ JOEY LOVE TOKEN. Present to your valentine tonight with love.

❤ HAPPY VALENTINES DAY to my sexy little man lots of luv – Peach

❤ Competition winner announced next issue!

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## EYE QUOTE

*Among the floral tributes at Reggie Kray's funeral was one which read:*
*a) you was a legend*
*b) you was a crook*
*c) you was ungrammatical*
**Question in DAILY MAIL quiz.**

## EYE SAY

**CAPITAINE,** thanks, thinking of Martine. All the best. SOUS-FIFRE.

**SPEECHWRITING** by Britain's leading professional, Mitch Murray – see page 31.

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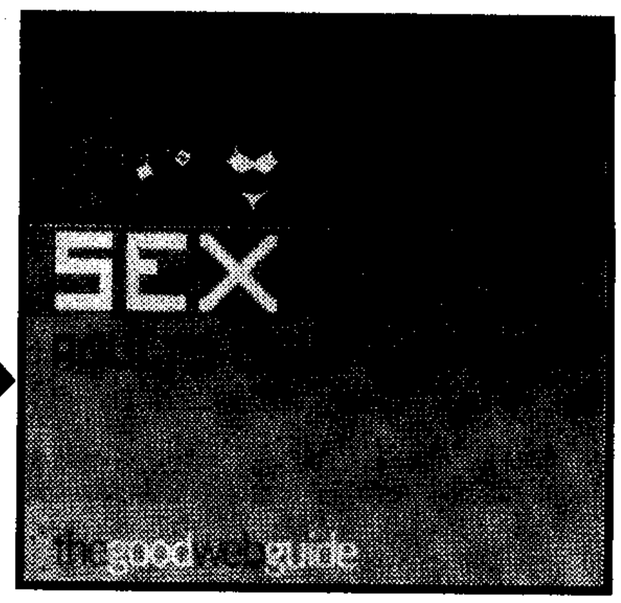


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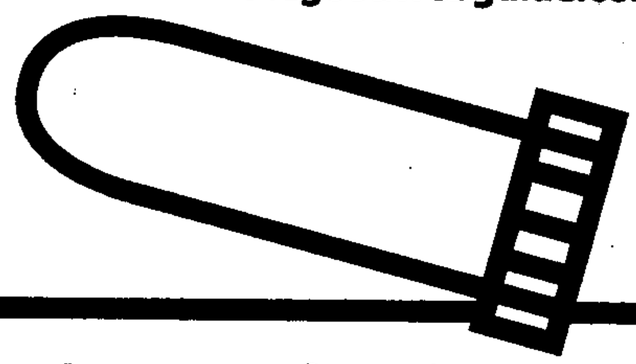

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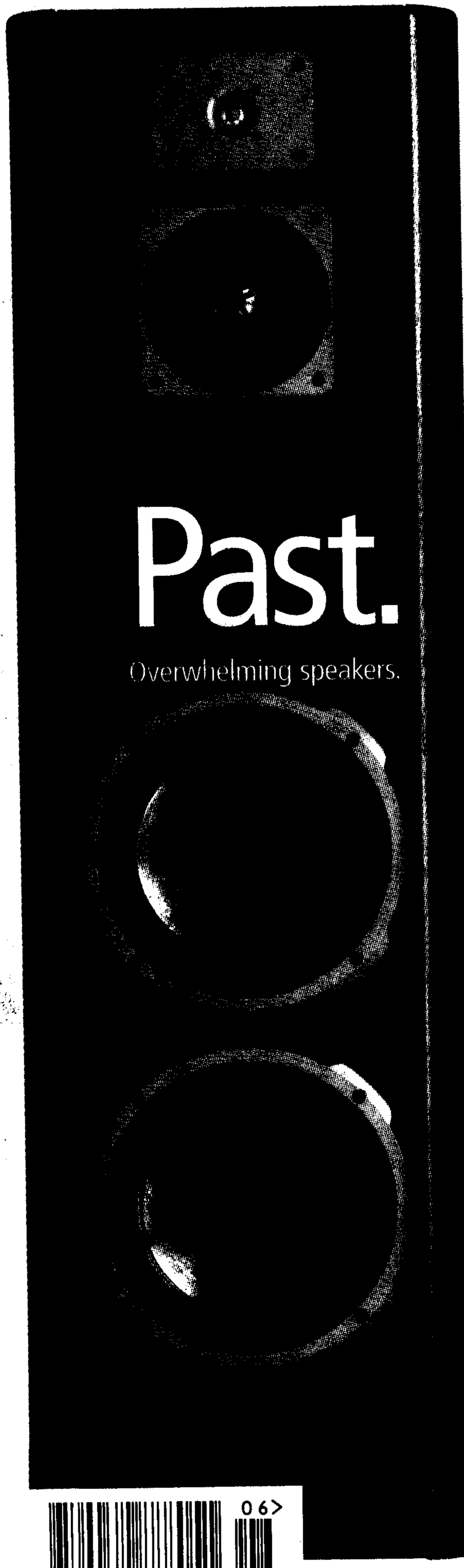

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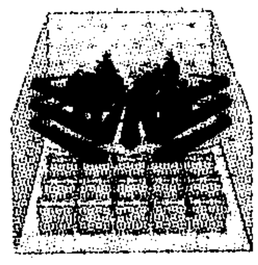
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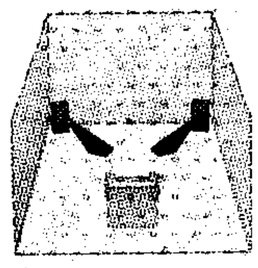
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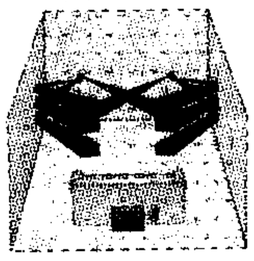
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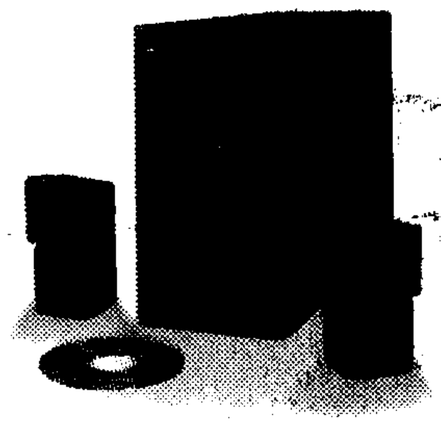
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Published by Pressdram Ltd, 6 Carlisle St, London W1D 3BN. 020 7437 4017. Printed by East End Offset Ltd, Empson St, London E3 3LT. Distributed by P. E. Distribution Ltd; Mortimer Hse, 230/236 Lavender Hill, SW11 1LE 020 7223 9971